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MEMORIALS
OF
GEORGE WRIGHT.

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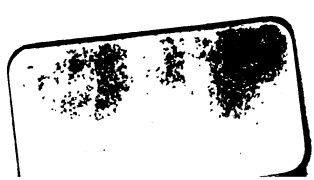
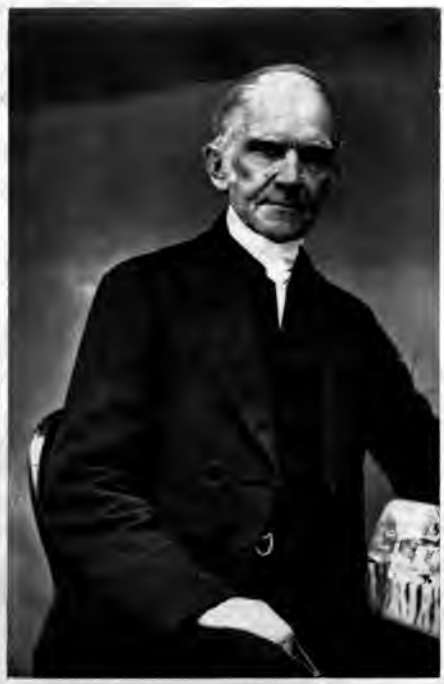
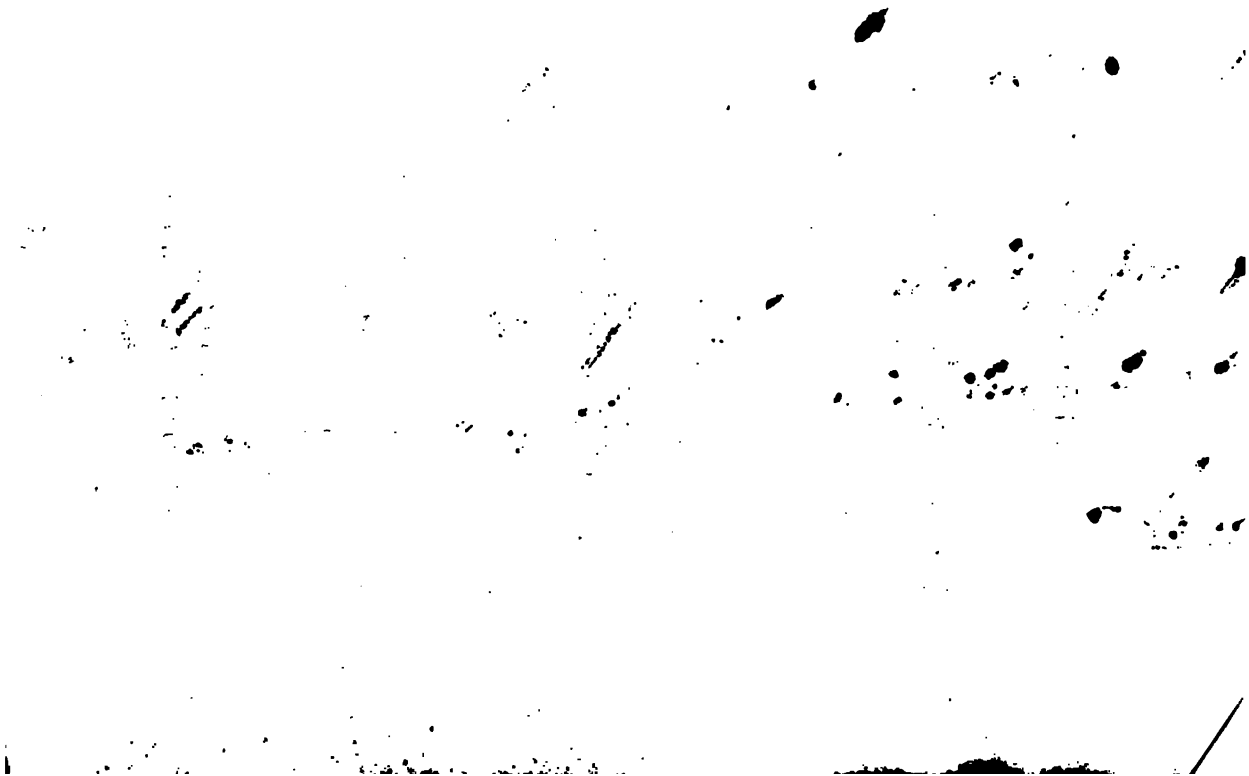
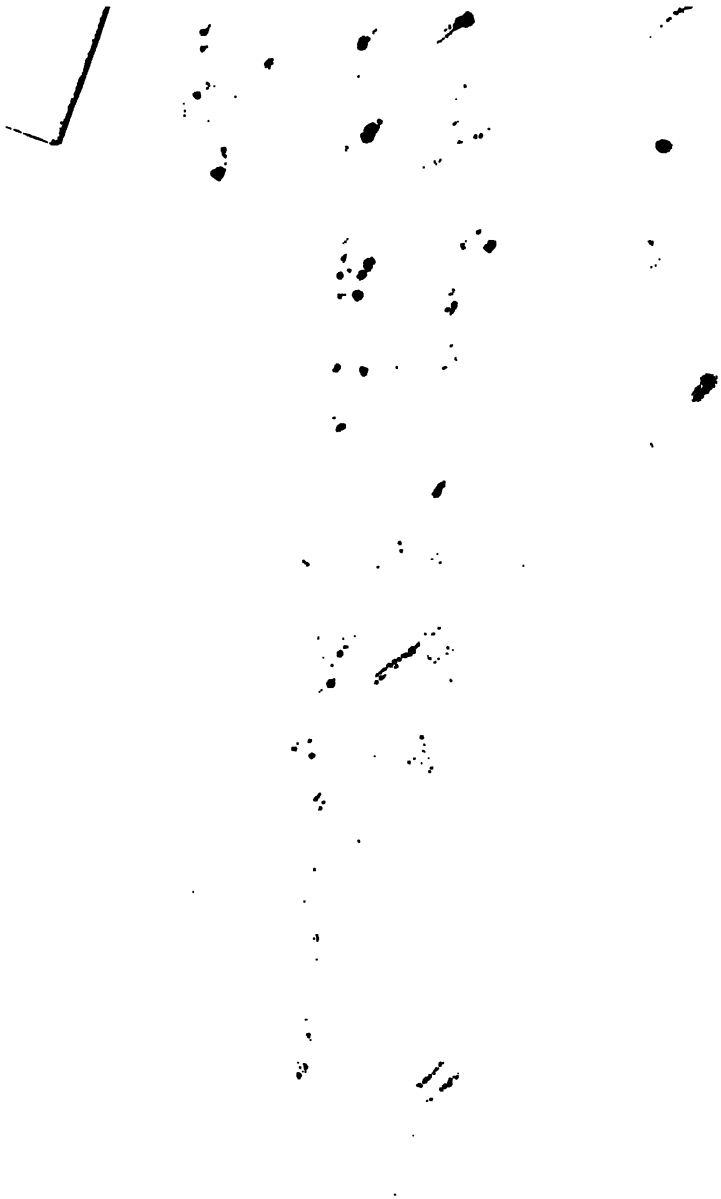




Yours faithfully, in bonds of
mutual love
Chas Hughes





MEMORIALS

OF

GEORGE WRIGHT,

FOR FORTY-EIGHT YEARS PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH AT BECCLES.

COMPILED BY

SAMUEL K. BLAND.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

LONDON:
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1875.

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MEMOIR.

THE life of every man of God is a present blessing to the Church and to the world while he dwells on earth, and its memory abides, a precious inheritance, after his departure. The savour of his witness for truth and grace, righteousness and peace, is as ointment poured forth,—cleansing, healing, refreshing.

In gathering up a few memorials of the lengthened pilgrimage of one such, we labour under some disadvantages, and on this wise—he seldom recorded his own feelings, thoughts, and searchings of heart, and still more seldom did he make them the topic of public discourse, although the gracious influence they had on his ministry was manifest to many. We easily recognize a shallow scholar, a pretender to intellectual attainment, ever noisy with the little he knows as the babbling brook; while the man of sound, rich learning is like the strong, deep-planted root that proves its power of life by the health of the silent growing tree. So did our brother dwell by the rivers of water, and bring forth his fruit in his season. If he spoke seldom of the husbandman's process, he witnessed to its reality and wisdom, and unobtrusively became the guide of many who, though walking in darkness, could only be satisfied with the same light.

Mr. Wright's diaries are, with few exceptions, bare statements of facts and occurrences, while many of the heartfelt comments on them are found in his letters to trusted and sympathizing friends. We have carefully gone through all of these attainable, and have sought to give the results honestly and without more partiality than possible, taking into account the cordial friendship and honest veneration that exist in the writer's heart and judgment for his departed friend.

If any should be disposed to think we are writing as of one who had no failings, we deprecate the idea. We know if he were by our side he would repudiate such a notion. No. If others thought they saw some, he himself felt far more; but we certainly never knew a man who made greater conscience of whatever he did, and sought more entirely to be guided by and approved of the Lord. It would not be for us to search for and seek to expose any faults in spirit or errors in judgment of one whom God honoured in his service for threescore years, and now has called up higher. He often—ah, how often!—groaned, being in heaviness through manifold temptations, and by reason of the sin that dwelt within, and by this was a warning to those who can lightly treat any sin, and be content with an easy religion. He deeply and constantly mourned over his own sinfulness, but he continually resorted to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and thereby pointed us to the same sure source of purity and acceptance.

He walked closely with God, and feared HIM above many, proving thus the blessedness of that fellowship; and now he is not with us, for God hath taken him—by a somewhat different road, indeed, than Enoch or Elijah, but by a way as safe, and the end as sure. God has

answered the greatest part of his prayers, and will answer the rest. He has taken his spirit to himself, where he longed to dwell, and in the fulness of time he will call to the redeemed part now in the dust of earth, and then all that is redeemed shall awake in the likeness of the Redeemer, and shall be satisfied. Then shall his servants serve him without fault, see him without a veil, and praise him day and night in his temple.

> "With them numbered may we be
> Now and through eternity."

Not many incidents in the early life of our beloved friend can be gathered up, for very few are recorded by himself, and he has outlived most of his contemporaries. His youthful years were spent in a humble sphere, and in constant industry quite congenial with his ever-active spirit. The care of her eight children had mainly devolved on his mother, and most, if not all, of these are known to have profited by the example of that good and excellent parent. Before, however, the youngest of the family had attained his seventeenth year she was removed by death from their midst. Our brother, then just nineteen years of age, oft alluded most feelingly to this sorrowful event, and the next year he left Framlingham for a situation at Southwold. He had but just come to man's estate when, having been hitherto mercifully preserved from most of the open follies and sins into which youth is so generally drawn, it pleased God to call him by grace into a heart-knowledge of himself, and thenceforward keep him a consistent seeker after his kingdom and righteousness, to partake in gracious abundance of that godliness which is profitable to all things, and to value above all besides the favour of the Lord, and to

maintain and promote with unflinching, unselfish zeal the honour of his cause.

A letter written to his eldest brother, William, will best describe the dawn of this "day of grace":—

Southwold, May 17th, 1811.

DEAR BROTHER,

Had a bond of enmity superseded the possibility of epistolary converse between us, our silence on such a ground might be justified; but while bands of natural affection subsist I am at a loss how to justify it. I take shame to myself for having so long neglected this duty, which by the laws of brotherly love I am bound to perform; but having now resumed my pen, I am determined that, if a correspondence is not maintained by us, it shall not arise from negligence on my part. I have no doubt but you will learn with pleasure that my motive for writing proceeds not merely from the consideration of it as incumbent on me by the relation in which I stand to you by nature, but also by the relation in which I stand to you by grace; that your brother who now addresses you is inquiring the way to Zion, and, he trusts, with his face thitherward. Perhaps it will not be uninteresting to you if I relate some of the circumstances which, through grace, led me thus to inquire.

Through the recommendation of a kind friend I came into the employ of Mr. Bye, of this place, a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, in Church fellowship with the Wesleyan Methodists, a man whose uprightness of conduct and complacency of behaviour were an excellent comment on his profession, and did not fail to attract my notice, win my esteem, and influence my mind to the consideration of religion. Not going to the Fountain of Wisdom to have the scales of ignorance washed from my eyes, but following

the ignis-fatuus of my depraved will—blind reason—I soon found myself in the bogs of scepticism. For some time I wandered in them, till the glorious beams of truth pierced the clouds of error, and showed to me my folly in following so blind a guide, and my still greater folly to attempt to stand upon such dangerous ground. I therefore quitted my position, and began to direct my steps toward the plain of Revelation, my feet not unfrequently sticking in the quags of Socinianism; but, however, I trust that I have at length gained sure footing in the only true way, and so far as I am acquainted with it I find it is so pleasant that I should be willing to resign all things beside that I might walk in it. I have not so clear an evidence of my acceptance in the Beloved as I could wish, but I have reason to be thankful for a growing confidence in him; and my desire is to live to his glory, and to know nothing (comparatively) but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

As my inexperience may frequently expose me to the assaults of Satan, I hope you will favour me with that advice which longer experience enables you to give, by following of which I may stand aloof from many of his snares and shun his devices.

I feel great pleasure in informing you that brother and sister Lord are seeking the pearl of great price, that brother Holmes is enlisted under Immanuel's banner, and I trust sister H—— is not without her desires to be engaged in the same cause. If all be well, I shall be at Framlingham about the 8th or 9th of June. I should be glad to have a letter from you before I go, if convenient. Present my love to my yet unknown sister, and accept the best wishes, for your spiritual and temporal welfare, of your affectionate brother in the double bond of nature and grace, GEO. WRIGHT.

Before noting any of the later experiences of his life and ministry it will be most fitting to give their general outline in his own words, as related at a meeting of his friends on the day when he attained his eightieth year. The following address was reported by a short-hand writer, and afterwards revised by himself:—

"It would be very pleasant to me, my dear friends, if I could give you a full record of the Lord's goodness to me up to this day. I owe him a debt of gratitude, indeed, for his tender, watchful care; but I am suffering much infirmity of body. Yet I will do what I can, and trust the Lord will answer my brother's request, and give me a sanctified memory.

"Could I call up the innumerable blessings of Providence, and the richer blessings of his grace which I have received, and then look forward to what is yet in reserve for me, I should exclaim—

'When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.'

But I do not often dare take up the language of transport. I must get beyond this imperfect state before I can do that, and now rejoice if I can record what God has done, and sing—

'Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by thine help I'm come;
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.'

"I was born at Framlingham, on the 19th of May, 1789, the seventh of a family of eight. My mother was a mother indeed—careful, kind, and energetic, who, by her own business as a mantua maker, with a little annuity, was able to provide for us in times when the necessaries of life were exceeding dear (flour 7*s.* a stone).

"I gave early proof that childhood and youth are vanity, although I did not go to the same excess of evil as many others.

"After a time, I left home to seek employment, and two months after my dear mother was taken from me; and if ever I knew what the breaking of the heart is, it was then.

"In June, 1809, I came to Southwold, where I remained upwards of eighteen years; and when I have remembered all the way in which the Lord has led me, this incident has appeared to me as the point on which all the subsequent events of my life depended: it was a signal step, followed by other circumstances, which terminated in my settlement here. Has not a reflection of this kind sometimes passed your minds? Have you not looked back upon some marked occurrence as giving a turn to your future course? 'He leadeth the blind by a way that they know not.' We gather from this that we are in safe hands, and may calmly and quietly trust in him.

"At Southwold I began to attend worship amongst the Wesleyan Methodists. I felt considerable respect for them, though not from any religious feeling or principle; but I thought they walked worthy of their profession as Christians. After I had attended amongst them they requested me to take my place in the class. I did so; but it was wrong of them to ask me, for I had no thorough conviction of my state as a sinner, although I felt something like a desire to

be religious or to do something acceptable to God. It is not surprising that I was left to myself, in a graceless, self-righteous profession of religion, and fell into grievous sins—sins for which I have mourned secretly, and with shame before the Lord, when they have been brought to my remembrance, and when, like Ephraim, I have borne 'the reproach of my youth.'

"But the ever-blessed God, whose thoughts were thoughts of peace and not of evil, was pleased to give me a deep sense of my sin, and to awaken in me an anxious concern to know whether I should be saved. Sometimes a hymn or a portion of the Word of God would lead me to hope for salvation. Very distinctly do I remember how the nature of faith in Christ was first shown to me. I saw that I must go out of myself and trust in another, and have never seen any reason for altering that view of a living faith; yet at that time I knew but little of Christ in his person and righteousness, the precious object on which I was to place my trust. The eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews was made particularly blessed to me. It is that portion where God has declared that he would make a covenant with his people, and would remember their sins and transgressions no more.

"I still associated with the Methodists, and, feeling a desire to be doing something for the good of others, I mentioned it to one of the preachers, who suggested that I should preach the Word, and accordingly they put down my name on their preaching plan; and I find by that plan, which I still have by me, that I began to preach on the 29th of May, 1814, just fifty-five years ago. I laboured earnestly and with great pleasure in the places to which I was appointed, was greatly attached to the people, had warm and kind

friends among them, and became an ardent supporter of their system, although I think there was something more of the free grace of God in my preaching than in that of others, from the conviction that I then had that 'by grace we are saved.' But about the year 1818 my mind underwent a great change, and, from reading the Word of God, I was convinced that the doctrines I had held were not scriptural.

"The first passage that struck my mind was the third and fourth verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc. The word 'according,' connecting these verses, was like a nail fastened in a sure place, and forced upon me the conviction that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings according as we were chosen in Christ before the world began. From that time the Bible seemed to me a new book. I could trace the precious truth of God's electing love in all its pages; and so clearly and irresistibly was this doctrine presented to my mind, that I was compelled to receive it with my whole heart. But I had not yet got rid of my Arminian sentiments, and I began to question whether I had not been carried away by first impressions, and that I ought to examine the subject more fully, by reading what was said on both sides of the disputed point. My desire was to ascertain what is truth, with a determination to embrace it in whatever form it appeared and by whatever name it might be called.

"This was the beginning of a mental conflict which I cannot well describe, and for the greater part of two years I was kept in a state of suspense and painful indecision. My feelings at times rose almost to agony, and in my distress and anguish I was almost ready to cast myself down

upon the floor of my little room. At length, wearied with the course I had taken, and ceasing from man, I resolved to take the Word of God as my only rule, and pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that I might be guided into the truth. This was attended with the happiest result. My judgment was soon established; and I have to bless God that from that time I have never faltered in my belief that the free, sovereign, perfect, and invincible grace of the Triune God is the sole cause of the salvation of sinners. In moments of hallowed and grateful recollection I have regarded this change as one of the most signal mercies of my life. Being decided in my convictions, I made them known, and, as a necessary consequence, received a communication from the superintendent preacher, signifying that my services as a class leader and local preacher were dispensed with. I had no reason to complain of this, but without an unkind feeling gave up my connection with those with whom I had been associated for years, and for a while stood aloof and alone.

"But now I come to an event at the period of my life which I cannot pass over. It was the year 1820, when I suffered a bitter bereavement in the loss of my wife—bitter to me, but blessed to her. The grace of God was manifested in her, and I had the utmost proof that she was 'a vessel of mercy afore prepared unto glory.' When I was under serious concern, she opposed me, and sometimes in a manner which was quite at variance with her natural kind temper; but even then she felt the convictions and accusings of a somewhat enlightened conscience. On going into her room one evening, I found her weeping. I asked what was the matter. 'Oh,' said she, 'I have had such a manifestation of the love of God to me.' This was nothing fanciful or

visionary. The spiritual change in her was apparent and unquestionable. With the gentleness, humility, and docility of a child, she was continually inquiring after Jesus, from a desire to know more of him, who was become so precious to her. For some time the current of her happiness flowed sweetly on; but the cares of an increasing family, and other circumstances, deprived her of the joy of her first love, and she sank into a state of comparative lukewarmness. After the birth of her fifth child, the Lord renewed the visits of his presence, and gave her such tokens of his unchangeable love, that her cup of blessedness was full to overflowing. I had seen nothing like it before; her 'joy was unspeakable and full of glory.' Little did I think that this was preparatory to a severe trial. A sleepless night soon followed, when she was continually repeating parts of hymns and passages of Scripture, with the frequent interjection—

'Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain!'

The next day we found that inflammation of the brain had set in; the disease increased fearfully, and in a few days she was reduced to raving madness. The shock to her mind was so severe and overwhelming, that it was not till several months after she was able to take the management of her family. She was then suffering from cough, which terminated in consumption. Her spiritual comforts were not then restored; but when her wasting strength failed, and she could do no more, for three months before her departure she waited, in full assurance of hope, till her change came. I was accustomed to inquire frequently—I think almost every day—into the state of her mind, and her answers were always satisfactory and cheering. After the usual inquiry, one morning, she said, 'I have no great joy, but there is no con-

demnation,' and then began to repeat the verse of a hymn familiar to her—

'No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all he hath, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the' eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.'

"The end came, and when I saw that she must soon die, I said to her, 'Our union must soon be dissolved; what are your prospects?' In a faint whisper she replied, 'I see Jesus; he is holding out to me the crown of righteousness, and says, "Come up hither."' She spoke no more, but fell asleep in Jesus.

"Many heavy trials followed. One of these was a harassing doubt of the immortality of the soul. I reasoned upon it as I had been accustomed to reason, and thought that reason would lead me to a safe and satisfactory conclusion. But I found that reason would not do in the hour of temptation. I carried my doubts to the Word of God, and found relief. Cares and troubles from various causes pressed heavily upon me, and the words of David were the secret utterance of my soul, 'Deep calleth unto deep; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.' Yet I remember that one day, when my spirit was thus overwhelmed within me, I passed the carriage of a nobleman in the street, and thinking for a moment of his rank and wealth, the reflection almost involuntarily passed my mind, 'With all my sadness and sorrows, I would not exchange conditions with you.'

"Going on with this bare outline of my life's brief history, it is proper that I should state that in 1821 my attention was directed to the subject of baptism. I forget exactly what

was the exciting cause. On this, as in all matters of faith and practice, my aim, for upwards of fifty years, has been to know the mind of God. I turned to his Word and searched it diligently, availing myself of every means within my reach to understand its meaning. If I was under any bias, it was a kind of undefinable secret wish that I might find pædo-baptism right. But I searched the New Testament with rigid impartiality, and not in any of its precepts, precedents, or principles could I find the shadow of a reason for infant baptism in any form. With regard to the Word of God and its authority, this rite, so extensively observed, appeared to me an absolute nullity. After about six months' deliberate examination, I was convinced that the immersion of believers in water, in the names of the persons of the adorable Trinity, is the only baptism which Christ—our lawgiver, king, and judge—has instituted. At the same time I saw a beauty and glory in the ordinance, and felt that I should account it an honour to follow the example of the Incarnate God, and was baptized on the 17th of March, 1822.

"The Church at Beccles was then without a pastor, and soon after my baptism requested me to come and preach the word of life to them. I came reluctantly, not knowing any of the people, and having heard unfavourable reports of them; and on the 21st of April I began my ministry among them. They wished me to engage myself for a month; but I declined, from a desire to serve the cause of Christ in Southwold, which I then thought the providence of God had called me to. At various intervals, however, I came here till the August following, when I accepted a call to preach the word for three months. This was followed by a proposal that I should continue a further three months, with an intimation that it would not hinder them, in the mean time,

from requesting me to take the pastoral oversight of the Church. My reply was, 'I think it necessary that a minister and people should well know one another before they resolve upon a pastoral settlement, and I would rather wait a twelvemonth before we decide upon so important a matter.' Three months more were, by mutual consent, added to my probationary period, and in May, 1823, I was unanimously requested to take the pastorate. A month was to elapse before I was to give my reply, and during this time I waited continually upon God, that I might know what he would have me to do. I was willing to take the office or not, just as he pleased; my mind was like an even balance, and I watched to see how the scale would preponderate, with perfect ease as to the result. At the end of the month brethren met me to know what decision I had come to. I told them that I had not been able to decide upon anything, and that I only wanted to know what the will of the Lord was, that I might do it. Our brother, Mr. Kent, replied, 'We hope, sir, you will consider the voice of the people the voice of God.' I paused a few moments, and then said, 'I am willing so to consider it, and will accept the invitation of the Church to be their pastor.' Here I have remained from that day, and here I trust I shall remain while life shall last.

"After I was settled in the pastorate, I continued to reside in Southwold, and for nearly five years and a half travelled the distance of twelve miles every Lord's day, through all seasons and in all weathers, with but few intermissions. At length I felt it was necessary that I should be entirely separated from the business of the world and give myself up to the work of the ministry. By a concurrence of providential events—events indelibly impressed upon my mind, and which

I can never reflect upon but with wonder, gratitude, and joy. —the desired change was brought about, and we removed to Beccles on the 11th of October, 1827.

"Being now at liberty to employ my time fully in the Lord's service, as soon as I could I began a course of village preaching, and this field of labour was gradually enlarged till I regularly occupied eight stations. The power of the Lord accompanied the word, and many were called, saved, and edified. Brethren from Norton and Toft can well remember the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord which we enjoyed. A goodly number of those who received the word gladly were baptized and added to the Church; some of these have died in full assurance of hope, and others remain to this day, who, I have pleasure in testifying, have maintained, by grace, an honourable profession. At Carlton and Oulton our meetings were often very happy; the streams of the river of the water of life flowed freely through the word; and some in Lowestoft, as well as others, who were athirst, came and drank freely. I could call over the names of some whose memory is to me pleasant to this day, who, after living by faith, have passed into the better country. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' At Wrentham, the gospel was a joyful sound of free and full redemption, and from that place and its neighbourhood I baptized eighteen persons. Bungay was one of my stations, where many were gathered together, on whom the blessing of the Lamb enthroned came down as showers upon the mown grass. I baptized eighteen or twenty of those who, through grace, believed, and who afterwards were dismissed and formed into a Church in that town. But I was not able to sustain these labours; health gave way, and for a time it was doubtful whether I should recover. Yet my life has

been mercifully preserved, though I have not been able to resume the services in which I delighted.

"It was of the Lord that I was set aside from the pleasurable work of an evangelist, and confined to the more restricted office of a pastor, who is ordained by the Holy Ghost to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. But is the labour in this comparatively narrower sphere less, or are the requirements necessary to fulfil its ministration more easy? Far otherwise. Abiding communion with God—a richer unction of the Holy One—habitual meditation—a deeper and more comprehensive judgment of the mysteries of God—a fuller knowledge of sin and of salvation, and of the solemn verities of the law and gospel, by experimental realization, are part of the qualifications of a faithful pastor, together with all the sympathies of love and zeal, kindled and kept burning day and night by fire from heaven. Taken away from my villages, three sermons on a Lord's day and one in a week evening were as much as my feeble health could do. But having obtained help from the Lord, I continue to this day. We have seen his goings in the sanctuary; have had our bygone days of ingathering and increase, and now thank God and take courage. He has purposes of love yet to be accomplished; and when he helped us to build this house for his name, he did it to subserve his design of mercy. Our God will revive and carry on his own work. Let us praise him for our fellowship in the spirit, and may brotherly love abound more and more.

"I have been speaking of the Providence which has guided and blessed me; but I have overlooked many things which I ought ever to remember. I will briefly mention two or three. When I suffered my bereavement in

1820, I was left with a family of four children, the youngest not three years old; but the care of God for me and them appeared in disposing a very excellent person to take the charge of them and be my housekeeper, who did all that she could for their comfort and welfare. This passed on for about three years, when I was led to the knowledge of her who was afterwards to be my wife. I think it right to mention this, because I regard her as a gift from the Lord. I value her for her excellencies, and owe to her more than gratitude can repay for her care, prudence, diligence, and integrity. She became a mother indeed to my children, who, I believe, will ever think of her with grateful love and esteem. So abundant has been the goodness of the Lord.

"My life is now coming to its close. Eighty years have passed away since I entered into this world, and he who hath kept me so long will keep me to the end. He never intermits his care for those whom he loves. If trials come in our path, our best way is not to touch them, but to leave ourselves in his hands, with a full acquiescence in his disposing will and wisdom. Confidence in his covenant, with the submission of the heart to his sovereign pleasure, will yield a holy serenity, which no external circumstances can disturb. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.'

"In the course of the last few years I have been often in heaviness, through manifold temptations, attributable, as I apprehend, in part to a physical cause. My brain became affected, perhaps, from too much labour, and subjected me to what is called nervous depression. Satan has taken advantage of this, and assailed me with his fiery darts. But all the pain I suffered is for an object worthy of God and his exceeding grace; and when I am brought to an extremity,

this is my relief: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Tried faith will be triumphant.

"And now, brethren and friends, I thank you for all your kindness. My heart's desire is that you may enjoy God's gracious presence, and be rooted and grounded in his perfect love. I do not forget you in my daily prayers. I remember every brother and sister at the throne of grace. And there are some individuals, who have long been associated with us in our congregation, whose names I have long borne up at the mercy-seat; it may be that the time will come when, in answer to prayer, they shall obtain mercy. 'Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Seek to do good to all, by all means. Consider yourselves not only as the sons of God by adoption, but his servants also; and with the liberty of sonship, may you serve him in your generation until you enter into the rest which remaineth for the people of God."

Without unnecessarily repeating any of this concise and simple narrative, we must take up some points but lightly noted therein. Not long after his removal to Southwold Mr. Wright opened a school, but about the year 1812 entered into an engagement with Mr. James Jermyn, of Reydon, who had been during some years gathering materials for an elaborate collection from the English poets of synonyms, epithets, and phrases, and to this laborious occupation Mr. Wright betook himself during at least fifteen years, in the course of which he carefully read the works of the best English classics. Mr. Jermyn continued on the same work until his death, in 1852, when a great pile of MS. materials was the result; only a thin specimen volume, however, was ever published.

Our brother was also actively engaged in preaching the gospel in connection with the Wesleyans for several years, often taking long journeys on foot in this service, for he was always a good walker. He was first put on the preachers' plan, May 17, 1814. Of those years of indefatigable labour scarcely a record remains, but blessings certainly accompanied the word, which told very distinctly of the grace of God which bringeth salvation, and of peace with God through the blood of the Lamb. Of the still clearer light he obtained into the glorious doctrines of sovereign grace, and of his removal to Beccles, his own statement has already told. He was not long in proving, by the true tokens of divine power, that his coming to Beccles was of the Lord, and as the years rolled by many were added to the Church, and the joys of the sanctuary were often abundant. Trials, sharp and perplexing, were not wanting; but we are assured that in the fellowship of saints healing consolation was largely realized, and a gracious witness borne for the Lord, who walked in their midst.

The removal of a pastor from his people Mr. Wright ever regarded as a momentous act, one never to be lightly effected or promoted, either by himself or any destitute Church. Hasty settlements he would never countenance; herein he was true to convictions formed by long observation. When he had been at Beccles about twenty years, he was invited, amongst other ministers, to supply the Church at East-street, Walworth, then without a pastor; and his weighty preaching proved most acceptable to the people, who, after hearing him several times, gave him a very hearty invitation to abide with them. The writer, who was then a member of that Church, well remembers the anxiety with which his answer was awaited, and there

are many still remaining at Beccles who remember also the anxiety felt there on the matter. Letters of affectionate remonstrance were sent, urging him not to forsake the people to whom his ministry had proved so profitable. Our brother was greatly perplexed as to what course the Lord intended him to take, and after much prayer and thought he resolved to submit the question to several esteemed brethren of the associated Churches, and to abide by their decision, beseeching the Lord that it might be *his* also. They consulted, and gave in their counsel that his right place was in Suffolk, and so in Suffolk he remained; and the Lord proved by many signs during the succeeding quarter of a century that his appointed work was there. He never doubted that the voice of the Lord called and commanded him to Beccles, and he rejoiced in many precious proofs that the Divine Will was also for him there to abide until he should be called up higher. Another servant of God was sent to Walworth, the warm-hearted, simple-minded Jeffery Moody, and him also the Head of the Church largely blessed there. At his settlement, Mr. Wright preached to the Church a sermon of great sweetness and power, founded on the passage, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." The writer took down the substance of this discourse, which was published in the *Gospel Herald* for January, 1863.

Other invitations to different spheres of labour our brother received during his long pastorate at Beccles, but to none of these did it seem so difficult to say "No" as to this. So he dwelt amongst his own people to the end, and God honoured him to the end, and after his pastoral work had been laid down many came forward and were added to the

Church, testifying the power of the word through his ministry to their souls.

At the close of the twenty-fifth year of his ministry at Beccles, a meeting of much interest was held—called together as an "Ebenezer" service, to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord through all that time, and how also he had enabled the people to clear off a debt of £100 incurred by repairing the chapel, and making more accommodation therein. This is recorded as "a time of spiritual pleasure which will be long remembered." Advantage was taken of this opportunity to present their pastor with a silver cup, bearing the following inscription:

Presented to
MR. GEORGE WRIGHT,
By his Church and Congregation,
As a token of their high esteem,
On the 25th anniversary of his Ministry among them.
Beccles, 21st April, 1847.

One matter may now very well claim special notice, the erection of the large new meeting-house which had for several years been felt to be most desirable, and to the promotion of which, after much prayerful thought, the pastor bent himself with his customary energy, and in the successful completion and payment for which it is not too much to say he was the chief instrument.

The old chapel, built in 1805, had been for a long while often over-filled, and was getting grievously out of repair, and even unsafe. A piece of ground adjoining, which fronted also to the new Station Road, was given by Sir S. M. Peto; plans were prepared by the writer; and on Good Friday, April 6, 1860, the corner-stone was laid by the pastor; Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Thwaites, Chairman

of the Metropolitan Board of Works, also taking part in the service.

Mr. Wright performed the ceremony with much feeling, using these few solemn words: — "I lay this foundation stone in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to whom be glory for evermore. Amen." And then, standing upon the stone, he addressed the assemblage, saying, "I know that this day has been anxiously looked forward to with lively and solemn interest, and these anticipations have been accompanied with fervent prayer and supplication to God, even our own God, and the God of our Fathers who are sleeping in Jesus. I trust the Lord will be present with us and prosper us in the work. I acknowledge that I have looked forward to this day with fear and self-distrust, lest I should be wanting in faith in the service to which I have been kindly appointed. We can do nothing that will advance the spiritual interest of immortal souls, nothing to promote the welfare of the Church of God here, unless the influence of his spirit be upon us, and unless we are blessed with the spirit of Jesus Christ and a fellowship with him in all we do. Our present undertaking has been commenced in the name of the Lord, and I feel assured that his blessing will rest upon us throughout, will supply that which is wanting, and bear us up in our work until it shall be completed. It will be a happy hour if whilst standing upon this spot we can look to Zion's king and commit ourselves and the building of this house to his superintendence and care.

"Nearly sixty years have passed away since five individuals were directed by special providence to seek spiritual food for their immortal souls under the pastorate of Mr. Hupton, of Claxton. It is pleasant to look back

and recall that event. These five individuals, knowing and believing from the divine testimony that as believers they ought to be baptized in the name of him that redeemed them, were baptized, and united to the Church under the care of that venerable man. They desired that others should be made partakers of the same gospel benefits, and invited Mr. Hupton to come and preach the word of life in this place. He did so, and in 1805 they proceeded to build the present chapel for the Lord, and I cannot look back upon the circumstances without reflecting upon the boldness of their faith. They were few in number and very feeble, and had but little of this world's goods, but they had faith, and built the Chapel at a cost of £470. The people gathered, and in 1808 these five persons and fifteen others united themselves into a Church. No longer ago than last Saturday I buried the last of the persons of whom this Church was composed, who at the age of eighty-seven years fell asleep in Jesus. I will not, I cannot recount all that God has done in this place; but the glory of the Lord has been seen in the conversion of many souls, and I am sure there are those around who will ever recollect that building with delight. A large number are sleeping in Jesus in the ground close by, whilst their spirits are gathered home before the throne above.

"In the latter part of last year it was found that the old building was unsuitable and inappropriate, and was not worth repairing. Just at this juncture Sir Morton Peto, with that generosity for which he is universally respected, kindly gave the piece of land on which we are standing, and we resolved immediately to proceed to the erection of a new building. Considering ourselves as monuments of God's mercy, our object is to build a house where the everlasting

Gospel shall be faithfully proclaimed, in the hope that many sinners may be converted unto God, and saints built up in their most holy faith. This is the main object we have in view, and I trust we may receive the blessing of heaven. The laying of this stone reminds me of that announcement of the prophet,—'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.' The building of this house is but a means to an end; it is being built to the Lord; and if he accept it, he will build in it a Living Temple, full of beauty and glory. The line and the plummet are in the hands of Christ, the Zerubbabel of the New Testament Church. Before Him all obstacles shall be removed, 'and the top stone be carried with shoutings of grace, grace unto it.' For the accomplishment of the object we have in view we dare not resort to any means but those which he approves, but would maintain the same principles which we have heretofore. It is not by an alliance with the State, nor by the interposition of the power, or the wealth, or the wisdom of this world, that the spiritual Church of Christ is sustained, or that its sacred boundaries can be enlarged. 'My kingdom is not of this world' is the declaration of Christ. That kingdom has nothing secular in its constitution; nothing secular in its laws; nothing secular in its officers; nothing secular in its privileges and immunities; nor is its glory the glory of the world. Its subjects are not the men of this world, but the heaven-born sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. If worldly influence be in any way brought into the Church, however plausible and specious the reasons for introducing it, it would desecrate, defile, and desolate and transform the Church from Christian into anti-Christian."

Mr. Wright then referred to the secondary object they

had in view—that of perpetuating the names of the martyrs who had suffered for the faith of Jesus, by being burned in a spot in an adjoining meadow, as the victims of Popish cruelty and bigotry. It was, he said, to the sufferings of the faithful witnesses of Christ at that and succeeding periods that we are indebted for the liberty of conscience we now enjoy.

On March 29 of the following year the building was opened. In the morning the venerable pastor preached the first sermon, a valuable discourse concerning "The Branch of the Lord,"—founded on the prophecy of Zechariah, vi. 12, 13.

The opening sentences are a glance of memory and hope—"On the evening of the 1st of July, we assembled for the last time in the house where we had been accustomed to worship God for many years. The occasion was solemn; that hour was to us the connecting link between the past and the future, and we took as the subject of our reflections the devout sentiment of the Church in the days of David, 'We will remember the name of the Lord our God.' Memory carried us back through a long period and recalled some of the numerous instances of the providence and grace of God, with which we had been distinguished and blessed. This morning the Lord has given us fresh reason to remember his name. By his good hand upon us we have completed this building, and we present it to him. Our God, Father, Son, and Spirit, accept the gift, record thy name in it, fill it with thy presence; and may Jesus, who holds all things for us, pour out of his Spirit into every heart, as an earnest of forthcoming blessing and prosperity."

In the afternoon Mr. Cooper, of Wattisham, preached,

and in the evening Mr. Collins, of Grundisburgh, both of these brethren having been long and valued fellow-labourers in the county. On the following Lord's day the writer preached three sermons, and opened the baptistry with four disciples of Jesus, who still live to rejoice in his salvation. The opening services will ever be remembered with grateful and satisfied feelings, and especially so as tokens of individual and abiding blessing were manifested under both the first sermon and that of Lord's day morning.

"The Lord's name be magnified."

A pamphlet, containing the full report of Mr. Wright's sermon, with outlines of the others, and historical notices, was published. From the last named we here give the following very interesting particulars :—

"In the early part of last century a small Baptist Church was formed in this town, and connected with a Church of the same faith in Rushall, Norfolk, under one pastorate. It has been said that Dr. Gill took part in an ordination service by giving a charge to the pastor, and that the charge in manuscript is still somewhere extant. Probably the pastor was Mr. Simmons, who died about the year 1759. The celebrated Mr. Robert Robinson, then a young man preaching in Norwich, was invited to supply the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mr. Simmons; but on the recommendation of Mrs. Anne Dutton, of Great Gransden, Hunts, a woman whose name is fragrant to many of the saints of God for her eminently spiritual letters and writings, Mr. Robinson was requested by the Baptist Church in St. Andrew's Street, Cambridge, to preach the word of salvation to them, and eventually he was settled in the pastorship of that Church. Not many years after, the Church in Beccles was dissolved.

"An interval of about thirty years elapsed, when a few brethren in Beccles, who had obtained mercy, attended the ministry of that faithful servant of Christ, the late Mr. Job Hupton, of Claxton, Norfolk, and were baptized by him on a profession of their faith. Claxton being ten miles from Beccles, the journey thither on the Lord's day was attended with much inconvenience, and in the year 1805 these brethren considered it their duty, though with very insufficient means, to build a house for worship in their own town, that others might enjoy with them the word and ordinances of Christ. At a subsequent period galleries were erected, and from time to time various alterations were effected for the purpose of affording sufficient accommodation to an increasing congregation.

"In 1859 it was found that parts of the building were in a state of decay, and it became a serious question whether any outlay should be made for a thorough-going repair, or means adopted for erecting a new building. At this juncture Sir Morton Peto, who had been previously applied to for the purchase of a piece of ground lying between the burial ground connected with the old chapel and the road leading to the Railway Station, forming a central and eligible site, generously gave this piece of ground, and the Church and congregation resolved at once, with the confidence and expectation expressed by Nehemiah and his confederates, 'The Lord our God will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build.'

"On the 6th of April, 1860, the foundation-stone of the present structure was laid. The building, which measures about fifty-three feet by forty-two feet, with vestry attached, is plain and substantial, of good height for light and air, with every convenient arrangement in the interior.

"As the site on which it stands adjoins a field where three faithful brethren died at the stake, as the victims of popish cruelty in the reign of Queen Mary, it has been thought opportune, in this time of papal aggression in our favoured country, to show our sympathy with these sufferers for Christ by making this house of God commemorative of that event. In the pediment is placed in relief—

THE MARTYRS' MEMORIAL,

and in the centre of the front a mural tablet is infixed bearing this inscription :—

NEAR THIS SPOT
THOMAS SPICER, JOHN DENY,
AND
EDMVND POOLE
WERE BVRNED FOR THE FAITH OF JESVS,
ON THE 21st MAY, 1556.

"WHEN THEY ROSE FROM PRAIER, THEY ALL WENT JOYFVLLY TO THE STAKE, AND BEING BOVND THERETO, AND THE FIRE BVRNING AROVND THEM, THEY PRAISED GOD IN SVCH AN AVDIBLE VOICE, THAT IT WAS WONDERFVL TO ALL THOSE WHICH STOOD BY AND HEARD THEM."

FOXE'S "ACTES AND MONVMENTS."

"AND WHITE ROBES WERE GIVEN UNTO EVERY ONE OF THEM; AND IT WAS SAID UNTO THEM, THAT THEY SHOULD REST YET FOR A LITTLE SEASON, UNTIL THEIR FELLOW SERVANTS ALSO AND THEIR BRETHREN, THAT SHOULD BE KILLED AS THEY WERE, SHOULD BE FULFILLED."

REVELATION vi. 11.

As the feebleness of age increased, Mr. Wright became very sensible of his inability fully to discharge the duties of the pastorate, and especially to keep up the three services on each Lord's day, which he had done for so many years, and which he regarded as very important; for he was strongly opposed to the afternoon of that day being given up to bodily ease, and too often carnal enjoyment, by even members of the Church. He told his people of this growing inability. Help was sought, and several young brethren came for brief seasons, to take part of the work.

In the autumn of 1863 the writer received a letter, wishing him to consider the subject, and—expressing in the warmest terms Mr. Wright's desire—if he saw the way clear, to come and take part in the ministry. This, however, at the time, he could not feel justified in doing; but the following year circumstances arose which seemed to say that he should be right in removing, and this, "coming to the ears of the Church in Beccles," led to what is explained in the following extract from Mr. Wright's diary for June 19, 1864.

"Bro. S. K. Bland having preached to us repeatedly, and having resigned his pastorate [at Chesham], the Church unanimously signified its approval of his ministry, appointed the pastor to arrange with him with a view to his becoming a permanent fellow-labourer with him in the work of the ministry."

This resolution had all the appearance of being dictated by cordial kindness and accompanied with fervent prayer.

Mr. Wright himself thus wrote:—"My frequent prayer is that, if consistent with the counsel and will of God, your way hither may be made plain both to you and to us. I know of no one whom I could more heartily welcome in the Lord, but I am compelled to hold my wishes in abeyance,

lest I should be disappointed. Let us try and keep at the mercy-seat, that we may hear what *he* will say who has promised to commune with us from thence. *Mercy-seat directions may be safely followed.*"

I came. An earnest spirit of grace and supplication continued for a good while to pervade the people; the connection lasted for four years—not without signs and tokens of divine approval and blessing, although not realizing altogether what perhaps most had looked forward to. Yet some seals abide to show that the matter was of the Lord; and while the ministerial union ceased the cordial friendship between Mr. Wright and myself ceased not—nay, as the end of his pilgrimage drew on, increased, and was felt to be, at least to me, growingly precious.

Very pleasant are those entries in Mr. Wright's diaries recording new year's gifts—cheerful, kindly tokens of regard, mostly from the younger members of his flock. We must, however, pass by these to notice one presentation on the 19th of April, 1867. I give the account in the words of the local paper of that week :—

"Services of a most interesting character were held on Good Friday, to rejoice in the extinction of the debt on the new and spacious Baptist Meeting-house, opened six years since, and also to celebrate the accomplishment of forty-five years' ministry of the pastor of the Church, Mr. George Wright. In the morning a meeting was held for prayer and praise, and in the afternoon Mr. Wright preached an excellent and appropriate sermon, founded on the words, 'Now therefore, our God, we thank thee,' and praise thy glorious name.' (1 Chron. xxix. 13.)

"A numerous company sat down to tea in the Assembly Room, which was filled to the doors at the evening meeting.

"Mr. S. K. Bland (Mr. Wright's coadjutor in the ministry), in the name of a number of friends, and in very affectionate terms, presented to the highly-esteemed pastor and to Mrs. Wright, his no less valued wife (whose constant, unobtrusive care for the poor and the sick, and kindness to all, has won for her genuine love and gratitude), a pair of handsome and most comfortable easy chairs. Mr. Bland, in concluding his address, said he trusted, while these should often afford needed bodily repose in their latter days, they would be symbols of the rest they were authorized to take in the assurance of their Heavenly Father's favour and care, as well as in the conviction that their service to the Lord was accepted and could not be in vain—rest, too, in the pleasure of knowing they were held in the confidence and affections of the people.

"Mr. Wright, deeply moved, very heartily acknowledged the unexpected gifts, and paid a full and just tribute to her who had for more than forty years been his devoted help-meet and sympathizing companion, and who had been entirely one with him in care for the people of his charge.

"Mr. James Read, of Laxfield, as a former member of the Church, added a few words, joining with the pastor and his co-worker in an earnest hope that 'so long as one brick was left standing on another of the "Martyrs' Memorial" the pure gospel of the grace of God might continue to be preached, and New Testament order observed.'

"Fervent prayer was made by several senior members of the Church, and intermingling with hymns of joyful praise constituted a truly happy meeting."

The aged pastor was now in the eightieth year of his age, and on the day when he completed that lengthened lease of life it was the writer's privilege to tender him, in the name

of many friends, a memorial of their regard. The account of this interesting occurrence, as published in the *Gospel Herald* for June, 1869, will be perused with pleasure :—

"A meeting of holy enjoyment was held at Beccles on the 19th of May, upon the occasion of the esteemed pastor of the Church completing the eightieth year of his age.

"A goodly number of friends belonging to the Church and congregation, and many others in the town and neighbourhood, gathered together; and, after partaking of the social meal, the meeting was opened with that never-failing song of fellowship, commencing—

'Kindred in Christ, for his dear sake,
A hearty welcome here receive.'

Mr. John Read, deacon, fervently implored the blessing of the Lord, and then the aged pastor proceeded to give a most interesting and touching account of the Divine guidance he had experienced from his youth up, in body, soul, and spirit, especially during his earlier days, and to the time of his settlement at Beccles.* Mr. Wright then gave out, and the people feelingly sang, that grateful Psalm of praise (the 71st, part 3) :—

'God of my childhood and my youth,
The guide of all my days;
I have declared thy heavenly truth,
And told thy wondrous ways.

'Let me thy power and truth proclaim
To the surviving age,
And leave a savour of thy name,
When I shall quit the stage.'

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* This has been given in full on pages 6—18.

"Mr. Bland then rose, saying that he had a very pleasant commission to execute—he was charged to give open expression to the cordial and united congratulation of many friends to Mr. Wright, on his having been so long spared to live and labour amongst them. And although he was not so robust as the man Moses, when he stood before Pharaoh to enter upon the Lord's work at fourscore, yet they were thankful he had far more vigour than Barzillai, who at the same advanced age declined to sit at the king's table, forasmuch as he could not discern between good and evil. Our brother was still able to enjoy much of the Lord's outward bounties and social comforts, as well as to discern the true meat and drink of the soul, and to divide unto the people the bread of life. They knew that he did not need any special gift to convince him of their sincere affection; yet they wished that the remembrance of this might be handed down to his children's children, when he himself and those now surrounding him had been called home. They had, therefore, requested him (Mr. B.)—and it was with cordial feelings of unabated and long-cherished esteem that he acceded to their request—to present to the aged pastor, in their name, a Silver Inkstand, on which were inscribed the following words:—

'Presented to Mr. George Wright, by the Church and congregation worshipping at the Martyrs' Memorial, Beccles, as a small token of their affectionate regard and esteem, upon his attaining the age of fourscore years, forty-seven of which he has ministered among them. May 19th, 1869.'

"And if it pleased the gracious disposer of all time, might he yet be spared a good while with all his powers to preach and teach Jesus Christ; if the Lord will, might he die in harness, and to the end continue in his loved

employment, until he heard the welcome voice, 'Come up higher!'

"With much feeling Mr. Wright acknowledged the gift, saying, 'You are quite right, my dear friends, in thinking that I *needed* no such gift to assure me of your kind feelings. We have been together for many years, and I think I can say, upon the whole, but few pastors and Churches have been more cordial. We have had our little rubs by the way; but all that is gone by. It is very gratifying to me that you have thought proper to give me this further expression of your love. I accept it with feelings that I cannot exactly express; but I do accept it with deep feelings of grateful love, and I thank my brother Bland for the very kind manner in which he has presented it. We esteem him as a brother in the Lord; and although circumstances have broken that relationship which we expected would have continued, yet that does not alter the brotherhood; and I can say, from my own heart, that I have not lost any of the feelings of love and esteem that I have had towards him these many years. I trust the Lord will keep me always with a grateful sense of your kindness, and dispose me to seek your good in the best way I can, by telling you of the wonders of redeeming love, and pointing you to him who is "the way, the truth, and the life."'

"The remainder of this happy and long to be remembered evening was spent in prayer and praise."

Another winter passed, and then it was felt that the time had come for the aged servant of God to lay aside the weighty cares of the pastorate. His letter of resignation is well worthy of perusal:—

To the Church of Christ meeting for worship in the "Martyrs' Memorial," Beccles.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

After much consideration, prayer, and waiting to know the will of God, it appears to me that the time is come for me to resign my pastorate over you. I am influenced to take this important step, not by any unwillingness to continue to serve you, nor because I am weary of the service in which I have been so long engaged—a service which, through God's abounding grace, has been the means of my own soul's blessedness—but the infirmities of age, and my frequently failing health, unfit me for the care and labour of the pastoral office. If I am spared till the 21st of April I shall have completed the forty-eighth year of my ministry, and on the same day I would, with grateful and adoring love, give up my pastorship to him who called and ordained me to it. His will is done. So long a union between a pastor and his flock seldom happens; but long as the period has been, it is pleasant to recollect that the unity has never been interrupted. From first to last I have enjoyed a large share of your kindness, respect, and esteem, and I cannot remember anything in your conduct towards me of which I can complain. I thank you for all. May I be permitted to say for myself that, according to the grace given unto me, I have accounted my life given to you; and as it belonged to you, my aim has been to spend it for your spiritual edification and joy in the Lord. And now I shall still be one with you during life's short span, and shall remember you all in my prayers day by day. May grace, mercy, and peace be with you from God the Father,

and our Lord Jesus Christ. Seek to be one in spirit, one in every labour of love, and cleave to each other in closest fellowship. Do this, and God will bless you and make you a blessing.

Wearied, worn-out nature requireth rest, and when I am no longer a *working* servant, I shall hope to enjoy the calm and hallowed blessedness of a *waiting* servant.

"The Gospel bears my spirit up ;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of my hope,
In oaths, and promises, and blood."

I remain,

Your affectionate pastor, friend, and brother,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, January 23, 1870.

The following resolution was unanimously passed and entered on the minute-book ofthe Church :—

"On the retirement of their highly esteemed minister, Mr. George Wright, the members of the Baptist Church in Beccles desire to record their grateful sense of the blessings which have been enjoyed during his pastorate of forty-eight years. They would rejoice that the great Head of the Church has preserved his servant firm in the faith, consistent in obedience to his commands, and in that godliness which adorns the gospel.

"They would hold in thankful remembrance those who in past years have, by the power of the Holy Spirit in the preached word, been brought out of darkness into light, and from sinful death to life in Christ, as well as of the many more who have been trained up, instructed, counselled, and confirmed, in the knowledge and will of God ; some of whom continue to this day, but some are fallen asleep.

"Neither would they be unmindful of the zealous and wise exertions made by Mr. Wright in promoting the erection of their commodious meeting-house, and its eventual clearance from debt.

"The Church would also unite herewith a warm testimony to the worth and Christian kindness of their valued and beloved sister, Mrs. Wright, and would fervently pray that the gracious care and consolations of the Lord their God may be richly experienced by both, until they shall be granted an abundant entrance into the joy of their Lord."

On Lord's day, April 29, 1870, he closed his stated ministry at the "Martyrs' Memorial Meeting-house" by two faithful sermons, the substance of which has since been published. That in the morning was founded on the 58th verse of the 15th chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Church of God at Corinth, and that in the evening was an enlargement and enforcement of the cheering yet solemn prophecy, "God will surely visit you" (Genesis l. 24), and thus the aged pastor concluded:—

"Here I close my ministry among you, having endeavoured to put before you a truth upon which you may safely depend, and from which you may derive encouragement and hope. 'God will surely visit you,' and bring you to your inheritance in the Canaan of heavenly rest, according to his covenant. You have my best wishes; and though I shall be no longer with you as your pastor, I shall remain with you as a holy brotherhood. These many years I have felt it my privilege to be one with you, as part of the Church of the redeemed; and I hope for the time to come we shall be preserved in the fellowship of brotherly love, and always welcome the time when we shall come together to the solemnities of Zion. May grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all, and may every brother and sister be satisfied with the goodness of God. My daily prayer is for your prosperity; as believers may you walk closely with God, and as a Church may you love one another with a pure heart fervently, and endeavour to keep

the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Such are my desires and prayers, to which I would add the words of blessing with which Moses directed Aaron to bless the children of Israel: 'THE LORD BLESS THEE, AND KEEP THEE: THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON THEE: THE LORD LIFT UP HIS COUNTENANCE UPON THEE, AND GIVE THEE PEACE' (Numbers vi. 24—26). So let it be: Amen. Pray for me. Farewell."

Thus terminated his regular and stated ministry, although he was enabled occasionally to preach for some time afterwards. But infirmity of body increased upon him, and the last two years of his life were, in addition, embittered by the alienation and hard speeches of some to whom he might have fairly put the question, "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" How deeply saddened and heavy laden his spirit was through this conduct few, if any, knew; nor how thoroughly conscientious he was, being jealous for God's truth and the purity of his Church. But over that cloudy day we draw a veil. He took his burden to the great burden bearer, and was lightened; committed his thoughts unto him and rested in peace, assured that the ark of true worship was in safe keeping; that the Lord reigneth ever, and all is well. His earnest care for the best interests of the Church did not diminish, and he ceased not to bear on his heart to the mercy-seat those who seemed to have forgotten the spiritual blessings formerly received through his instrumentality. He committed all—them, himself, and the whole Church—unto HIM who judgeth righteous judgment.

These are his own words on this painful subject: "Acts of kindness I cannot very well bear with an even mind; but with regard to the neglect and disrespect with which I am treated by so many whom I have endeavoured to serve

by the best means and in the best manner according to my ability, I have a kind of (I hope unblamable) stoicism. At least, if they are wrong, I forgive them, and wish them all the good which can flow from covenant mercy."

It is right to note that through all the latter part of his life our dear friend was subject to great infirmity of body, not only frequently unfitting him to carry out the labour for Christ which his energetic mind prompted, but bearing heavily also on his spirit, augmenting, perhaps even originating, that inward gloom and mental depression to which he was grievously subject. He would often allude to this as the work of the great enemy, of whose devices truly he was not ignorant, and would at the same time recognize therein the permissive wisdom of the Most High, alike a thorn in the flesh to buffet, and a sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself, but in the living God. These trials gave a very solemn tone to his ministrations, and more especially to his correspondence, in which he was more free to dwell on his own inward conflicts, for he ever regarded the pulpit as sacred chiefly to the exposition of the Word of God and the preaching of the gospel of the Son of God, on whose glorious person and work he loved to dwell, and would in exalted strains declare the "power of his resurrection." The divine person, office, and work of the Holy Ghost was also a prominent topic of his ministry; while in and through all the absolute, rightful, and holy sovereignty of Jehovah was never absent, forming both the rock of his own faith's triumph and the great argument used to convince men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He would know nothing of compromise, and believed not in the expediency of softening down the expression of any high and holy truth to render it, if possible, palatable

to carnal reason and human fancy. Nor did he ever seek to make his preaching popular by trivial anecdote, or observations calculated to raise a laugh: the solemnities of eternity he felt to be too real, the joys of salvation too deep, for a jest to be other than polluting.

We do earnestly echo our experienced brother's convictions, that much of the decay of vital godliness, and lack of true prosperity in the Churches, is owing to the prevalence of a morbid craving for excitement, superficially satisfying, both in sentiment and expression; something that, while it recognizes a certain (or rather uncertain) measure of responsibility to the Lord God, as ruler of the conscience and life, soothes that conscience and gratifies that life with forms of religious service and a heap of religious feeling, producing neither that repentance towards God nor faith in our Lord Jesus Christ which brings peace, that peace which he gives —his peace, which none can imitate and none take away, but which does itself take away love for the pomps and vanities of this world. With such a flesh pleasing system, and such habits, so sadly creeping into our Church life, the word of God is at war; and so was our brother's ministry, and that of many dear old veterans. No wonder, therefore, that their teaching has palled on the ears of superficial hearers, and a reaction set in. "The fathers, where are they?" But a more easy religion is the fashion of the day, harmonizing with outward attractions—the eye and the ear gratified. Music, and—if not dancing—songs that go to dancing tunes—for is not future punishment ignored, and hell itself denied by many? So the wound is healed slightly, the wound that was never deep. Verily, with such sacrifices God is not well pleased—but Satan *is*.

There is one personal characteristic of Mr. Wright's

life which demands prominent notice as having a most gracious influence on his ministry. He was pre-eminently a man of prayer, he lived in prayer, he loved the exercise ; it was with him a chosen, cherished habit. He believed in God, and proved him to be "the rewarder of those who diligently seek him." He believed in Jesus, and came boldly to the throne of grace *through him.* Yes, he ever made everything, small and great, an errand to the mercy-seat. He waited upon God who was his constant resort ; fervent and definite were his entreaties, humble and submissive his supplications ; not supposing he should be heard for "much speaking," he yet talked long and often with his Father in heaven, and "was heard in that he feared." Without doubt, he obtained the best part of his sermons on the knee.

Let us pause now to notice a few records in his diary.

In the year 1840 is an entry, made with evident interest, referring to the visit to Beccles of that noble missionary, William Knibb, and a goodly sum contributed there towards the work dear to his heart. Within a few years another note is made, calling forth grief and sympathy. "Nov. 15, 1845.—William Knibb died of yellow fever in Jamaica." So was that ardent lover of men's souls—that steadfast, much-enduring soldier of Christ—laid low, and laid to rest. Soon after the sad news arrived Mr. Wright, in common with very many ministers besides, preached upon the event, taking for his text Psalm cxvi. 15.

Twenty years later, the visit of another eminent missionary is recorded, the indefatigable J. G. Oncken, of Hamburg, the founder and faithful watchman of that wonderfully blessed enterprise, the German Baptist Mission,

which, commencing in 1834 by the baptism (at midnight, for fear of the—so-called—*Christians!*) of seven disciples in the river Elbe, has spread over the different countries of the continent, and now embraces 103 Churches, with 20,335 members, and 1248 preaching stations. Our venerable brother Oncken still lives and works in that fruitful field, with considerably enfeebled health and strength, but with undiminished zeal and love. May the Lord yet long spare him to guide and watch over the holy work.

In 1849, Mr. Wright was called to part with one of his most valued and attached friends, the venerable Job Hupton, of Claxton, who died on Oct. 19th, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and the sixty-fifth of his ministry. Their fellowship had been very close, and their mutual esteem deep and unalloyed. On the 25th his body was laid in the cold, dark grave (that appointed resting-place of the mortal part, watered by friendship's tears, yet brightened with the rainbow formed by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness), and on the following Lord's day our brother preached a most fitting memorial sermon for his friend, from the righteously appropriated text,—"Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." It will be remembered that it was a branch from the Church at Claxton which took root at Beccles, and grew, considerably tended by Mr. Hupton, whose occasional ministry there is very fragrant to some who still survive.

On April 5, 1854, we find an entry which may well serve as a witness to many parents respecting the momentous service and high privilege of training up their children, and seeking to promote their welfare in an honourable path of life.

"This day my son left for ——. The event is cheering and solemn. *Cheering*, as leading me to reflect on the

gracious providence of my covenant God, in enabling me to bring up and educate him, and in providing a suitable station for the occupation of his time and talents. *Solemn*, as the last of my family has now left the family roof, to pass through the untried scenes of life, and my chief and anxious duties as a father are now discharged. O that God may bless him indeed; and as my life on earth may ere long cease, may my children be gathered with me into his everlasting kingdom! Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen."

Dec. 13. Here also is another witness for honourable mention. "Gave to my valued and esteemed friend J. B., £25, as an acknowledgment for his kindness many years since in lending me money for which, in consequence of my straitened circumstances, I could pay him no interest."

In the erection of several chapels besides that at Beccles, Mr. Wright was also much interested and zealously engaged. The plain, comfortable meeting-houses at Bungay and Pulham St. Mary, with one at Lowestoft, may be particularized. The two first-named places had been taken up as Mission Stations by the Association, and at length grew into almost self-sustaining Churches. Pulham Chapel was opened in 1843, and Bungay in 1851. That at Lowestoft was erected in 1859, for the friends who for conscience' sake had to leave the chapel in London Street, when, as has been the case with so many, the plain meaning of the trust deed and the known will of the founders have been set aside—either surreptitiously or by force of human law, unworthily appealed to by those who should rather have regarded divine equity. The Norwich, Ramsgate, and other cases we could name as leaving a stain of injustice upon the promoters of loose communion, and as cautions for the future to those who

think it no censure to be counted strict in the observance of the laws of Zion's King.

But we must now come to the closing days of our brother's pilgrimage, during which it was the privilege of some to watch through growing infirmities his unshaken confidence in God. And now he was enabled to look with less agitated spirit, although his judgment remained unaltered, upon the affairs of the Church at Beccles, which for the past two years had troubled him so much. "The last words of David" truly describe the state of his mind at this time, while resting in confidence that the Lord would care for his own ark, and vindicate his servant. The feebler he became in bodily powers the more fully did he appear able to leave his own and all other interests with that faithful God, under the shadow of whose wings he had so long abode in safety; and while his deep interest in the welfare of the Church of God, especially that little portion of it with which for half a century he had most intimately communed, never diminished, he was enabled to cast the burden of every "contrary thing" therein entirely on the great burden bearer. He knew "whom he believed," and was well assured that he was "able to keep that which he had committed to him against *that* day." During the summer of 1873 he suffered from repeated and somewhat complicated attacks of his old complaint, by which he was greatly reduced, and which often threatened to snap the "silver cord," but from each he rallied.

About the middle of August a severe and very unusual attack of inward sickness prostrated him for several weeks, reducing him to extreme weakness. From this, however, he appeared to be slowly recovering, and was able to walk in his garden, while from other tokens the hope was encouraged that his valued life would be spared for a season.

Two friends in Christ, with whom for many years he had held occasional and valued communion, visited him towards the end. One of them writes:—

"It was about six weeks before his departure that my sister and I called to see him. He was leaning back in his easy chair with his eyes closed, looking very weak, but Heaven's own peace rested on his countenance. As soon as dear Mrs. Wright told him we were there he looked up, and with a bright smile gave us an affectionate welcome. After speaking a little of the nature of his illness, he said, 'None but God and myself know what I have suffered; but,' he added, 'there is a design in every affliction, and I think in this it is that I might know more of God.' This he repeated with great solemnity, and then after a pause said, 'We know so very little of him.' This is all I can distinctly remember, for he was too weak for any lengthened conversation. As we left, he pressed our hands warmly, and said fervently, 'The Lord be with you, and bless you!' It was not so much his words as his whole appearance and manner that made such a deep impression on my mind. He looked like one simply waiting the command, 'Come up higher.'"

A little later, while for a few days confined to his bed, his esteemed brother Cooper of Wattisham visited him, and after a solemnly pleasant interview, asked him on parting if, looking back on his fifty years' ministry, there were anything in the enunciation of the great truths of the gospel that he now felt at all doubtful concerning, or as, in the immediate prospect of meeting the Lord, he could wish to alter or suppress. With perfect clearness of intellect and surprising vigour, the aged servant of God raised his head from the pillow, exclaiming, "Not the shadow of a shade!"

This was felt to be a very confirming testimony. Surely "it is a good thing for the heart to be established in grace."

It was but a few days before his departure that our brother stood at his study desk (always a favourite posture with him), and wrote a few lines on a scrap of paper; these he handed to his beloved wife, and quietly said, "That is what I wish inscribed on my tombstone." * Whether there were any presentiments in his mind of the nearness of the end we know not. That time had indeed been long anticipated, for the strength by which his span had been lengthened out to over fourscore years was labour and sorrow. The closing scene, however, was sudden and unexpected. At midnight was the call heard—solemn, but most welcome to the wearied and well-worn soldier, and thus was the summons served and obeyed.

It had been for a good while his custom on Sunday evenings to lengthen out the family worship, and, surrounded

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The only distinction by which he desired to be known and remembered was—A SINNER SAVED BY GRACE.

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"The last evening we spent with our dear aged pastor was a very delightful one (it was the last Sabbath of his life), when about twenty of us met in his sitting-room. Mr. Wright came in after we were all assembled, and, sitting down, looked round distinctly on the face of each one, smiled, and seemed very happy. He was more free, easy, open and joyful than I ever saw him, seeming to be lifted above anything of an earthly nature, yet wonderfully humble. He passed the books for a brother (Mr. Holland) to conduct the meeting, as he felt too weak; but he gave the sweetest address; it did not appear at all ministerial, but more like a Christian father's advice to his family. After this he gave out the 54th hymn (Book I., Dr. Watts), and then prayed most sweetly, and before we parted gave out the verse—

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calm and sound; but soon after one o'clock he awoke with a spasmodic pain, and raised himself. The movement aroused Mrs. Wright, who had but just time to put her arm beneath his head when he gently reclined on her shoulder, and with one faint exclamation, without opening the eyes, breathed out his spirit into his heavenly Father's hands!

> "One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks;
> We scarce can say—'He's gone'
> Before the willing spirit takes
> Her mansion near the throne."

The writer was immediately summoned, and took the body from the widow's arms, while the wish crossed his mind that those sealed lips could just have said "farewell." Solemn was the hour when, "very early in the morning, a great while before day," we once more surrounded the mercy-seat, and sought grace to help in this new time of need.

It was a singular coincidence that the next day the minister of the Independent Chapel at Beccles, Mr. Flower, was to bid his people "farewell," having ministered amongst them forty years. The chairman of that meeting (Mr. Rix, a much esteemed townsman, who for many years had ample opportunity to observe our departed brother in public and in private life) paid a most emphatic and honourable tribute to his worth. He said: "The circumstances under which we meet are not a little affecting. Not only are we to take leave of our own pastor, after a long connection, but it was only yesterday another minister in this town, venerable in years, beloved and honoured by all, left his Church, left it in a good old age. It is true he

had retired before, but now he has left us altogether; ripe in all Christian grace, he has ceased from his earthly labours,

> 'Laid down his staff as one that is weary,
> And sweetly reposes for ever.'

"Seldom has one gone from among us so universally respected as Mr. Wright; and if I might venture to sum up in one sentence my impressions of him, I would say, I never knew a man in whom the elevating, softening, refining influences of the Christian religion, of the gospel, were so conspicuous, mellowing his excellent qualities and graces, and throwing around his old age a halo of more than ordinary loveliness." This tribute is as true to fact as it is chaste and beautiful in expression.

With the calm cheerfulness of one who knew that, when the earthly tabernacle was dissolved, he had a house eternal in the heavens, the aged disciple arranged everything needful to be attended to on his departure. He chose the spot where he wished to lie, close to the meeting-house which his indefatigable zeal had chiefly contributed to erect—"dwelling amongst his own people," as he expressed it: for his grave is surrounded by many others containing those who heard his word to profit, and have preceded him to the mansions of the Father's house. By his special desire, the brethren Samuel Collins, of Grundisburgh, and S. K. Bland united in the sad service of committing his body to its earthly bed. "Brother Collins," he said to the writer, "is my oldest friend in the ministry, and with you for years past I have been most intimate. I want you both to join in that service."

On Monday, October 13th, this request was fulfilled. Throughout the greater part of the day the rain fell

heavily; nevertheless, a large number attended, most of them, we believe, not only wearing the symbols of mourning, but sad at heart as for the loss of a friend. The followers comprised, besides the relatives, very many of his fellow members and former flock, who had long known and loved him, and profited by his clear and instructive ministry; twelve ministers of the associated Churches; the minister, deacons, and other members of the Independent Church, with three clergymen. Most of the shops in the town were partially closed during the day.

The body having been borne into the chapel by devout men, the service commenced by Brother Bland reading several portions from Psalm xc., 1 Thess. iv., and 1 Cor. xv., and imploring the Lord to sanctify their sorrow, to comfort the mourners, to bring to remembrance and raise in power the seed formerly sown, and the faithful witness borne, to heal, cleanse, and to bless the Church with true prosperity and spiritual increase. A hymn was sung, a beautifully appropriate hymn, but by reason of emotion joined in by comparatively few—

> "In vain our fancy strives to paint
> The moment after death,"

and then Brother Collins delivered a solemn and affectionate address, in which, while giving all the glory to the God of all grace, he faithfully told out the character of his departed friend. The following is an outline:—

"My dear Christian Friends, we are called together on a very solemn occasion. A brother much beloved, than whom no one was more highly esteemed, has passed from our midst. We may truly say a great man and a prince has fallen in our Israel. Yes; God endowed him with

large gifts; he was great in intellect, in power of communication, and in usefulness.

"My duty to-day is the fulfilment of the promise I made to the departed many years since, to attend his burial, should I survive him. This pledge I renewed at my last interview with him, a few weeks back. I have come now to discharge this painful yet pleasurable duty. It is indeed painful to consign to the tomb the mortal remains of a friend we loved so much, and whose work and mission among his fellow-men has now closed; but very pleasant to know that he has reached his rest, his home, his reward. The Master has placed on his head the crown of life, and the joy of his Lord is realized. His powers are mightier to-day than ever, his talents more brilliant, and his garments are whiter than the driven snow.

"I loved him, and for more than forty-six years I was honoured with his confidence and companionship. We lived and worked together in peace and love in our Master's service all these years, and now, blessed be his memory! Full fifty-nine years he laboured in the Lord's vineyard, and great were the blessings that attended his ministrations, both at home and among the Churches of this county and other places. Yes, he was greatly honoured of his God, and very useful in his work: wise, gentle, full of integrity, faith and good works, very humble, always willing, and most desirous of ascribing all the glory to the Lord. He preached, not himself, but 'Christ, and him crucified.' We wonder not he was so greatly, so universally esteemed. His character was most exemplary, his uprightness conspicuous to all; his firmness and unvarying confidence in the doctrines of divine truth were uniform from the time of his deliverance out of the trammels of Wesleyanism. He laboured diligently to

know the truth, never failed to express himself fully touching his convictions, and these he worked out with straightforward zeal. What he believed to be the truth of God—without the slightest hesitation, fearing neither foe nor friend—he freely spoke in all places. And now he is gone to meet his Master, and cheerfully to give an account of his trust, and we have no doubt he has been welcomed with "Well done, good and faithful servant!" He has built himself a monument here; this Church and congregation owe very much to his labours. Most of his old and warmly-attached friends are gone before him. He lighted and instrumentally guided them to their rest, and I doubt not they met him last Tuesday morning, and hailed him welcome home.

"This chapel cost him days, ay, years of care and toil, and he handed it over clear to the people. We all of us have grieved that anything should have occurred to give him pain in his last days; but we would fain hope a little reflection and God's forgiving mercy will heal up every breach.

"We bless God for his gifts. His talents were large, refined, comprehensive, and powerful, his language was chaste and elegant, his sermons eloquent and weighty, and his talents were well used, and so were greatly multiplied. His motto was, 'A sinner saved by grace.' The glory of all he was always anxious to ascribe to God alone. The great facts of divine truth were his stay and comfort through his long, laborious life, and these were his support in death. He was much beloved by his brethren in the ministry, while his services as secretary to the Association for many years, rendered with kindness, impartiality, and wisdom, were very valuable.

"To his aged mourning widow I would say, My dear sister, your cup of sorrow is full to-day, but that cup will be sweetened with the blessing and presence of God. I know well you were indeed a helpmeet to him, and your duties were discharged with most affectionate diligence. He said long since he could never be sufficiently thankful for you as a gift from God. God blessed you together, and you are only parted for a little while, to meet again to part no more. And you, his beloved family, have truly been blessed with a good father. May his prayers, his many prayers, be answered on your behalf. May his teaching and example prove a permanent blessing to you.

"The truths he believed and preached—ah, we shall all want them when we come to die."

The writer then took up the theme, and spoke with grateful remembrance of the long friendship which had continued undisturbed between their dear departed brother and himself. He said, "I wish to obey the injunction recorded in his self-prepared epitaph—to distinguish the departed only as a sinner saved by grace. It is not contrary hereto for us to call to mind the consistent witness he has so long and so clearly borne both before the public and in the Church; it is the witness of one who realized his high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It is to the glory of God's grace that he had been saved from faltering, either in his judgment of divine truth, or in the cleanness of hand, guilelessness of tongue, or righteousness of spirit produced by the love of that truth and of its Author. By grace he could honestly say, 'In all matters of faith and practice, my aim for more than fifty years has been to know the mind of God.'"

"Not very many knew the constancy of his love for the

Church of God—for the Church at Beccles especially, and his deep prayerful interest in her well-being to the last. We do not yet know, the Church, the town does not know, our loss in his removal. We have lost the prayers of a righteous man (his future prayers, not his past ones: these are gone up for a memorial before God, and shall yet be answered). We have lost the constant, holy, dignified testimony of his life and conversation against sin, impurity, and frivolity; against the looseness of life and habit so prevalent. He deeply felt that conformity to the world, and indulgence by the Christian in its pleasures and gaieties, was a crying evil, as also were all worldly schemes of expediency to promote the advancement of the Church. Against the proud Rationalism of the day also he strongly protested—that usurpation of the throne of the Holy Ghost by carnal reason. You know also how strongly he felt respecting the advance of Popery in our land, and the growing fascination of that glittering but deluding superstition of the reverence for outward rites, symbols, and ceremonies; the invention of a morbid craving after either flesh-pleasing or mental peace, not submitting to the authority of Christ and the simplicity of his teachings. Our dear brother's own personal religion was no easy one, gained by contact with others, or excited by external causes; it was intensely real, and in his ministry he sought the same reality and truth in everything connected with the kingdom of his Lord and Master. His experience had been won by conflict. He was almost to the last the subject of fierce assailments by Satan,—cruel temptations, not indeed so much to outward sin as to that of the heart before God. Few, if any, can have an idea of the conflict he endured; but by grace, through faith, he resisted. He fought a good fight, and overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony.

"It is not surprising that he was often misjudged. Some thought him harsh; those who knew him better saw in that strictness fidelity to conscience in the sight of God, and determination for righteousness, at all costs. Some called him reserved. The fact is, he had much intercourse with the Lord his God, and by that communion became imbued with the momentous worth of divine realities, and the unprofitableness of ordinary gossip. With any of kindred mind and habits he was a frank and profitable companion. To me he has ever been a valued counsellor, and I feel that now I have none left to whom with the same confidence I can look up for honest, trustworthy teaching and sympathy in spiritual things. But we may not murmur. The appointed time has come; to it he had looked forward without dismay, for he desired to depart, and be with Christ. He walked with God; he is not, for God has taken him. May those left behind have brought to their remembrance, with powerful blessing, the teachings of his lips, spirit, and life. You, his people, highly valued his ministry. I have heard many of you often declare this. Do not belie it now."

We then went to the grave, and with a few parting words and prayer left the body of our departed friend to the keeping of his loving Redeemer until the resurrection morn.

In the evening Brother Collins preached the funeral sermon from these words—"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Brethren Bird and Field, two former deacons of the Church, with other ministering brethren, also took part in the service of mingled sorrow and praise.

As a sequel to this account, I subjoin some notes made by an old and valued friend, who for forty years had

prized his ministry, and is well competent to speak of his diligent and truthful Christian service, and especially of his constant village preaching while yet in his strength. It is a pleasant glimpse into the past by a "plain man," and "a faithful tribute to a faithful labourer." Our friend says :—

"As I was walking on the road to his funeral, and thinking on the past and the present, Paul's noble confession darted into my mind, as recorded in 1 Cor. xv. 10, 'But I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' I then cast a look, and thought over the different parishes in which the departed had laboured in word and doctrine: Gillingham, Toft, Haddiscoe, Geldeston, Norton, Hales, Burgh St. Peter, and Loddon, in Norfolk; Westhall, Ringsfield, Carlton, Mettingham, Lowestoft, Worlingham, Bungay, and Wrentham, in Suffolk; and from these varied parts the people would come on Sabbath mornings to Beccles, to hear the gospel from his lips. Those were happy days to many, like drops of comfort falling into the troubles and bitters of life. Labour was mixed with pleasure and cheerfulness in the thought of Sabbath-day and village services. The ploughman would say, 'I must leave off in good time, Mr. Wright is coming to preach this evening;' the thresher would cut his noon-hour short, and say, 'I hope to hear Mr. Wright to-night;' the herdsman would attend to his cattle an hour sooner, that he might go to the village meeting; the tradesman and farmer would wend their way to the spot; the housewife and the dairywoman would get their work over a little earlier, that they might go and hear of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Our departed brother would labour to proclaim the gospel in its

simplicity. I have good reason to believe that the summit of his learning was great plainness of speech, that the unlearned might understand and learn the mysteries of the gospel. It is worthy of remark that the preacher would be sure to be in time, and not disappoint the people. I only remember our being disappointed *once*, and then he was unavoidably prevented coming, so we read, prayed, and sung together. He was a cheerful guest wherever he was invited, a cup of tea and humble fare he seemed to like best; yea, I know the good of souls and the glory of God were his best meat and drink. I have heard him say that Satan never could accuse him with preaching for what he could get by it. 'Not for filthy lucre's sake, but of a ready mind,' did he labour to lift up Christ on the pole of the gospel, knowing that nothing short of a look to God's appointed remedy could cure a sin-bitten and dying soul.

"He laboured to furnish the table three times for many years on Lord's days; yea, he laboured to have on it a feast of fat things, with the milk and wine, and all without money and without price. But time or fashion have wrought a change, though not for the better, for many very much miss the afternoon services; servants, the old, infirm, and country folks, too, have found a great loss, and often complain about it, and I hope God will hear their complaints and restore some of the former things. Again, he laboured long and hard to keep the Church *one*, and often proclaimed the oneness and union between Christ and his members, and he laboured to keep the congregation together, and varied his discourses to make them interesting, as far as his conscience and truth would allow him. He ever proclaimed from the pulpit the order of King Jesus,

viz. repentance, faith, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and good works for necessary uses, and in all the ordinances he would labour to show that Christ was all and in all. He always sought to show that nothing short of a triune Jehovah could save and restore fallen man, and meet the requirements of injured justice, could satisfy and fulfil a broken law.

"He laboured hard to build our new chapel, not only with his words and pen, but was often foremost with his money, thus encouraging others to give. He was an example to the flock; and had it not been for his liberality and zeal I have no doubt but we should have been in debt till this day. I well remember being rather downcast when given to understand that the chapel would cost half as much again as we at first calculated. I anticipated we should be long burdened with a heavy debt; but a brother said to me, 'No, not for long; for if Mr. Wright's life be spared a few years, we shall soon be out of debt, for Mr. Wright is so well known in town and country, and has stood so well and long before the Church and the world, that he will soon get the chapel out of debt.' And from that day my fears were removed, and in a very short time we sung the jubilee song, and I know that many felt glad, and it might well be said, 'What has God wrought?' Labour and prayer are healthy work for the soul; and as God's goodness passed before us, we had many happy prayer-meetings while the work was going on and the debt paying off. But 'the Christian man is never long at ease; when one trouble is over, another doth him seize,' for since there has been no afternoon preaching some go to one place and some to another, till the mind gets confused and men know not what they hear. I often hear shepherds say that rambling and straying sheep are always poor, and often get their coats torn; and I, from

experience and observation, believe it is so with the sheep of God's pasture, while many are tossed about with every wind of doctrine; when complaint is made, the answer is, We are rambling for food. Ah! if the under shepherd go astray, well may the sheep.

"But enough; I am getting from the point. I have no doubt but the deceased laboured in prayer, and with hope that at his resignation the good Lord would raise up an under-shepherd, lest the Church at Beccles should be like sheep without a shepherd.

"It is over forty years since I first heard him preach, and I seem to remember more of the first two sermons than I can of any other out of the many during so long a period of time. But the years are gone like a tale that is told; much that is passed calls for gratitude, and much for humility. I never remember being so vexed nigh unto anger as when I was informed that Mr. Wright had opened his house for Sabbath evening meetings. But in a short time my mind was quite changed, and I soon confessed the cause of the distance that I had felt and showed to the deceased; and I, one Sabbath evening, met with a few old friends to hear him read and expound the Scriptures, and heard some things that were a lifting up to my downcast mind, and a help to me in the path of tribulation.

"For many months I was enabled to remember him day by day at a throne of grace, and I doubt not but he realized all I could desire for him, for the well-ordered covenant and the everlasting love of God supported his mind, and enabled him to teach and talk of the long-loved word, and just before he entered eternity, to sing, 'Worthy the Lamb!'

"After I helped to lower his remains into the grave,

I could hardly keep from weeping aloud; but one word Mr. Collins said helped me to refrain; it was, 'The Master passed through the grave.' Though dead, yet may he speak, is the desire of a feeble one.—J. E."

I cannot prevail on myself to put a full period to these personal reminiscences without giving one of the many valued letters of sympathy, received by my dear friend, who for nearly fifty years was the true and loving helpmate of our brother—a pastor's wife, indeed. It is written by the honoured pastor of the Wattisham Church, who succeeded Mr. Wright in the secretaryship of the Association. May many widows derive from it consolation.

Wattisham, Oct. 13th, 1873.

DEAR BEREAVED FRIEND,

This afternoon I am with you in spirit, while you and others are engaged in the funeral rites of one whom death has at length severed from you, and from all earthly associations. By him "the vale of tears" has been traversed, and through the grace of God a long, useful, and honourable pilgrimage is terminated, and the aged pastor, the faithful servant of the Lord Jesus, is now in the presence of his glory.

I can offer you no consolations that you have not already received abundantly under your loss, but most sincerely do I sympathise with you under this visitation which leaves you solitarily to pursue your pathway the residue of your days. May reflection of the past, and anticipation of the future, the not very remote future, yield you many profitable and sweet communings, in the absence of him whose society and companionship have been the light of your dwelling.

The starlight of your skies has been extinguished, perhaps, that you may have more of the sunlight of his presence who is the friend and husband of the widow. The cistern is broken that you may go oftener to the fountain. Creature comforts are hereby removed to make way for greater and more abounding consolations from "the God of all comfort."

But looking beyond the range of personal interest and considerations of personal privations, the event that comparatively desolates your home has ever been among the arrangements of the well-ordered covenant, whose gracious provisions, great promises, and glorious issues are among the blessed truths the departed one ever loved to dwell upon and enforce.

Loss and gain are comprised in this bereavement. You have lost a loving life-companion, the Church has lost an instructor, counsellor, and guide, and this sinful world has lost a sanctified inhabitant; but heaven has gained an accession to the number of the glorified, and you, I expect, in the end will be a gainer by the greater consolation and richer experience occasioned by this providential dispensation.

And then the infinite, eternal gain of the recently enfeebled, but now glorified, saint!

"Death from all death hath set him free,
And will his gain for ever be;
Death burst the massive chains of woe,
To let the mourning captive go.

"Death is to him a sweet repose,
The bud was ope'd to show the rose;
The cage was broke to let him fly,
And build his happy nest on high."

It is now the hour of interment—half-past three. May Abraham's God sustain you while conveying all that could die of your beloved husband to its last resting-place, where, probably, you with himself will seek and secure "a possession of a burying place," rendered doubly secure by the power of his resurrection who

> "Entered the grave in mortal flesh,
> And dwelt among the dead."

But for distance and growing infirmities, I should have been a spectator of the closing scene to-day. But reminiscences of the past, with earnest sympathies and prayers, will occupy the hour that is surrounding you and your dear children with funeral rites and weeping friends.

"My father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

I am, dear friend,

Yours in the sympathy of Jesus,

J. COOPER.

MRS. WRIGHT.

Our biographical sketch would be incomplete if a prominent place were not given to the long, patient, and faithful service rendered by our brother to the Association of Baptist Churches in Suffolk and Norfolk. He was one of the first, and continued one of the steadiest of its promoters and guardians, ever seeking its growth and health.

The establishment of this union was felt to be an act demanded in the interests of truth.

An association of Churches under the same title had existed during at least the thirty years of the last century; but there had been for some time a gradual departure from the precious truths which formed the basis of union, a

loosening of the hold upon, and a keeping back of those truths in their full and simple testimony. This was made more manifest at the meeting of 1829. Mr. Wright had been appointed to prepare the circular-letter for that year upon this important subject, "*The Power of Godliness.*" The clear and firm assertions contained therein of the sovereign power of the Holy Ghost in the conviction of sin, conversion, and entire work of the renewal of man's soul, called forth considerable opposition and suggestions for alterations; and although eventually the letter was adopted in its entirety, with the proviso that the Association put forth no more circular letters, it was felt by many that the cause of God and truth, and the maintenance of true unity, called for a separation. Eleven Churches withdrew; and at a special conference seven of these resolved to form a new Association for upholding the old truths and practices which still remained dear to their hearts.

In May, 1830, the first meeting of these Churches assembled at Beccles; our now venerable brother Philip Dickerson, then of Rattlesden, presiding as moderator. The circular-letter prepared by Mr. Wright, upon "*Christian Unity*," enters very clearly into the nature of *true* (and therefore valuable) *unity*, in contrast to mere seeming (and therefore unprofitable) *union*. It traces Christian oneness up to its source—divine love in Christ—and then treats of the reasons for, and means of its cultivation between them that are Christ's for mutual sympathy and help, for the maintenance and advancement of his kingdom on earth, and for the propagation and defence of his truth.

During the forty years of his connection with the Association, Mr. Wright was appointed to write *twelve* of the annual circular-letters. The whole series of letters issued by that

body form a valuable compendium of concise treatises on the most important subjects connected with our holy faith and righteous practice, most of which deserve to be re-issued and widely circulated. Those written by Mr. Wright are doubtless amongst the most clear and carefully prepared. I have already noticed the first two of these—no, not quite the first, for as far back as the year 1827, the one upon "*The Sin of Apostasy*" was from his pen—being a very solemn inquiry into that "falling away from the faith of the gospel, by denying the truth or divine authority of its doctrines, or by a practical renunciation of its holy principles and influence in the life and conversation," which has proved such a disgraceful blot and so mischievous an evil in the professing Church—the former not so frequent as the latter; the latter even more insidious and poisonous than the former. This "falling away" is traced in its downward steps, warning reproof being administered, while the immutable counsels of divine love, the inviolable nature of the Atonement, and the effectual power of divine grace, are valiantly maintained from the Scriptures of truth.

"*The Power of Godliness*," as we have seen—by its searching, faithful maintenance of the divine prerogative, in the sovereign bestowment of spiritual power, as opposed to a fancied inherent ability in sinful, fallen human nature to act faith, and work out righteousness towards God—led to the separation from the old Association, while the letter of the following year (on "*Christian Unity*"), the first of the "new Association," sets the whole matter of Christian fellowship in a good clear light.

In the year 1835 the subject appointed was "*The Relative Duties of Church Members*," including those called for in their collective capacity, those special duties resulting from official

position, and the correlative duties of members to their brethren in office, and the personal duties of every member respectively. This letter was much esteemed at the time, and its re-publication was called for.

In 1840, a topic which has since roused much thought and no little division of judgment was chosen — "*The Importance of a Revival of Religion in the Churches, and the Best Means of Promoting it.*" This address deals most emphatically with the deep need of true revival *in the midst of Zion*, that she may be glorious within and powerful without; it suggests no new mode of service, but definitively points to the sure word, and enforces faithful, energetic use of the all-sufficient means therein commanded; prominent amongst which are noted the cultivation of habitual spiritual-mindedness in believers, individual effort, fervent prayer, and the faithful preaching of the gospel. Many of the wise thoughts on all these branches I should like to quote largely, as specially important at the present time, but the limit of our space forbids.

Two years later, a compact and closely argued dissertation followed upon "*The Resurrection of the Body;*" and in 1845 the letter took up that fundamental subject—"*The Extent of the Atonement, in Relation to the Salvation of Sinners.*" A solemn and precious topic, too often shrunk from and much too often handled unwisely, but one which enters into—we might say lies at the foundation of—every other gospel truth; for if a man be right upon the atonement, he cannot be very wrong anywhere.

The circular for 1848 dealt with "*The Signs of the Times;*" and seeing the last quarter of a century has not greatly altered "the times that are passing over us," it seems fully as applicable now as then. Mr. Wright was accustomed

to watch closely and observe with accuracy the changes and strivings in the political world; he was ever alive to the restless working of the great apostasy of Rome; and was convinced that she who had been of old "drunken with the blood of saints,"—who is still in ever-augmenting purpose and skill striving for renewal of power, and using, as ever, her secret plottings amongst both rulers and peoples,—would yet be permitted for a short time to gain her end. He had long marvelled at the evident blindness and torpor of Protestants, especially in our own country, respecting this, and how that, while seeking a righteous liberty for conscience, the fact was lost sight of that popery is not merely a *religion*, but a *political system*, alien to the British Constitution, and subversive of all liberty of soul and body. This subject, therefore, obtains a prominent place in the letter; not, however, to the ignoring of that sad declension from sound doctrine, worldliness and other evils within the Church of God, which mark our epoch as belonging to "the latter days."

Two more years rolled by, and then our brother took up a theme of more personally spiritual character—"*Growth in Grace*," and very sweetly and profitably does he write thereon. "Growth in grace" is treated of as "relating principally and essentially to the hidden life of the soul, and its progress in the experience of believers from their first quickening by the Holy Spirit until they are settled and established in the faith, and reach the fulness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus—that divinely communicated life which never dies, but grows up and fills and actuates the soul until it enters the immortal state and enjoys God as its everlasting portion. But the first symptom of the heavenly life in us is a conviction of guilt, and a consciousness of our sin and misery

as transgressors, according to the words of Christ in the promise of the Spirit's mission, 'when he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall convince the world of sin.' As the knowledge of God is essential to true religion, we must have a sense of his justice before we can know and trust his grace." The resulting awakening "from all delusive dreams of happiness and hope by a consciousness of the spirituality, authority, and power of the law" is then traced—the discovery of the heart's depravity, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, confession of the righteousness of condemnation, earnest prayer—as escaping for very life—fuller discovery of innate feebleness against temptation, dejection and despondency — until Jesus opens the door for the prisoner, unrivets his fetters, assures him by the gospel of the forgiveness of his sins, and says to him, with a power that begets faith in what he says, "the Son hath made you free indeed." But we should have to reprint the whole of this treatise to do justice to its clear and comprehensive teaching.

In 1853, Mr. Wright wrote the letter on "*The Pecuniary Obligations inseparable from the Voluntary Principle*," showing that principle to belong to the constitution of the visible kingdom of Christ, as opposed to compulsory payments exacted by secular authority, and thereby demonstrating that "the voluntary principle is a positive institution, to which in the obedience of faith we must submit; and the free offering of our substance to the service of our Lord is not so much a gratuity as the tribute which he demands of the favoured subjects of his grace." The bearing is shown of this central truth on the various branches of Christian service; and well would it be if all who profess to owe themselves and their all to King Jesus lived in the cheerful

spirit of rendering unto him all that his cause, his servants, and his people need, and only felt in doing that—"of thine own have we given thee."

Three years later "*Praise*" was appointed as the subject of the circular-letter, appropriately following that of "*Prayer*" in the preceding year, and unto it our brother rose with a heart attuned with a sense of personal mercies and adoring watchfulness of the manifold wisdom of God in the kingdom of his grace and glory. The only *object* of adoration, the *Triune God*—the *subjects* and occasions for grateful joy, and the *means* by which this holy exercise must be maintained in spirit and in truth, are wisely treated of, and the members of our Churches stirred up to glorify God with the lips, "making melody" unto him with that praise which is "comely for the upright."

In the year 1858, a still more profound subject occupied the now well-experienced pen, "*The Glorification of the Saints*," a subject, he tells us, "suggested by a brother who through threatening sickness had, as he apprehended, nearly reached the further verge of the desert, and was strengthened by grace to go up to the far-seeing height of the everlasting Covenant, whence he surveyed his inheritance, began to breathe the air of heaven, and foretaste its joys." The completion of the designs comprised in Electing Love and Redeeming Righteousness is the delightful theme. "Purification in the hand of our Redeemer. . . . Whatever of evil we are subject to in the present time will cease in a moment when our change comes. Sin, the disease and deformity of the soul, the law of our members which warreth against the law of the mind, will be for ever done away. . . . What will be our emotions when we shall know that the last taint of inherent corruption is purged away by that

ineffable unction of the Holy One which will fall upon us when we quit the body? . . . . With the destruction of sin every cause of pain and sorrow will cease. Gone, gone to an immeasurable distance from the howling waste of adversity, over which, as one greatly beloved of God, the saint was ordained to travel to the better country, where, settled down, he is so filled with life and joy that no anxious care, no perplexing forethought, no unbelieving foreboding, can grow there; gone from this world, the enemies of the cross can reproach and persecute him no more; nor will his garments be again spotted with the flesh, nor his ears vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. His warfare is accomplished; he has cast off his armour; he has gained the victory and the prize for which he fought. The way-worn pilgrim is at rest, and the soft hand of Sovereign Grace will wipe away the tears of affliction and sorrow from every eye."

This appears to us a peculiarly beautiful letter, flowing from the pen of one ripening for the harvest, and being made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." It closes with this well-timed exhortation :—

"In prospect of our approaching glorification, beloved brethren and joint heirs with Christ, let us live as pilgrims, unspotted from the world, and come up from the wilderness leaning upon our beloved. Let our loins be girded, and our lights burning. Account no service, no sacrifice for Christ too great. Our resources are in his fulness. Let us lay in the balance against afflictions and sufferings the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Be active, fervent, zealous. And may we so live in all the Churches as to find on the hill of Zion the prelude, the earnest and foretaste of our future and everlasting communion with

saints in the kingdom prepared for us, and secured to us in the settlement of covenanted love before the foundation of the world."

The next letter (1860) was the last our friend wrote, and on a subject very appropriate—"*The New Testament Ministry*," treating of it as the ministration of the gospel of reconciliation, of righteousness, and of the Spirit, and is well worthy of prayerful perusal, not only by every one who goeth forth to preach and teach Jesus Christ, but also by them that hear, who are charged to "try the spirits, and to take heed how they hear."

Mr. Wright was frequently appointed to preach what is called an "Association sermon," at the annual meetings of the body, and the power and sweetness of those ministrations are by very many remembered with gratitude. Those gatherings of representatives and members from the various Churches have for many years been seasons of singular interest and joyful solemnity, while many seals have been given from on high, making the truth preached the power of God unto salvation, witnessed by effectual and enduring conversion. There have been occasions also when those composing the Churches from far and near have been revived, aroused, instructed, and blessed. Deep and glowing has been the feeling when, with the tear starting from many an eye, the parting hymn of praise has been raised by the congregation, generally numbering more than three thousand persons:—

"Blest be the tie that binds
The heart in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above."

For the past twenty-eight years the meetings have been held

under the spacious tent made for the purpose, eighty feet long by thirty-five broad. This, however, has nearly always been found too limited, and the curtains being rolled up, the outer circles of the great congregation have stretched out far beyond, while many seated on the green sward and under the shade of friendly trees gladly received the word.

As far back as 1824 Mr. Wright preached at the meeting of the old Association, that year held at Bury St. Edmunds, the subject being "The Nature and Extent of Gospel Liberty; or, the Moral Obligation and Evangelical Obedience of Believers Maintained in Connection with their Freedom from the Law," always a leading and much cherished part of Mr. Wright's convictions concerning revealed truth. This sermon was published by request of the Association—as also was the one he preached at Aldringham, in 1842, still remembered by some of the many then present as a very choice exposition of that exalting theme, "The book of the decrees in the hand of the Mediator" founded on Rev. v. 5. Many other of his "Association sermons" also still retain their hold on the hearts of survivors, while many who received them with joy are fallen asleep. A list of the times, places, and subjects of these discourses will recall the pleasurable feelings of many.

Bury St. Edmunds	1824	Romans viii. 4-6
Wattisham	1827	Col. i. 28 *
Wattisham	1831	Psalm cii. 13, 14
Rattlesden	1832	Isaiah li. 9, 11
Hadleigh	1834	John xvi. 14
Stonham	1835	I. Peter ii. 6
Grundisburgh	1839	Rev. iv. 3
Aldringham	1842	Rev. v. 5
Wattisham	1845	Genesis xlii. 14

* Published in the *Gospel Herald*, 1866.

Stonham	1846	Genesis xxiv. 33
Occold	1847	Psalm xxxv. 3
Wetherden	1848	Ezek. xxxiv. 29
Chelmondiston	1850	II. Chron. xx. 20
Sutton	1852	Isaiah xxx. 26
Cransford	1857	Romans viii. 1
Fressingfield	1859	Isaiah liv. 1
Wattisham	1861	Matt. xxii. 11-13

In the year 1862 the meetings were held at Beccles, at the close of which it is recorded in the minutes that "the aged pastor of the Church entered the pulpit, and after thanking the brethren for their affectionate regard to himself, as expressed in their fervent prayers on his behalf, addressed the young ministers present on 1 Tim. iv. 15, and then concluded with prayer."

Two years later Mr. Wright attended and took some part in the public services; but his increasing infirmities prevented him from again attempting the somewhat arduous service of preaching to so large a congregation, great part of which necessarily assembled in the open air. And at the meetings of 1865 he felt it necessary to resign his office as secretary, which he did by the following letter :—

To the Ministers and Messengers of the Suffolk and Norfolk Association of Baptist Churches, assembled at Grundisburgh, on Tuesday, the 13th of June, 1865.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

The time is come when I think it due to you, as well as necessary for myself, that I should vacate the office of Secretary to the Association, which I have held nearly thirty-six years. I am entered upon my seventy-seventh year, and feeling the infirmities of age, which have been increased by attacks of pleurisy in the last winter, I

am too enfeebled in body and mind to be much occupied in the services of our Lord's kingdom in the earth.

It is pleasant to remember that during the many years we have been associated we have been greatly favoured with the harmony and fellowship of brotherly love, and God himself has been with us and blessed us. I thank you, beloved brethren, for the kindness and respect you have always shown me; and could I call to mind any instance in which I have grieved a brother by word or deed, I would say to that brother, "forgive me." And now, brethren, accept my affectionate farewell. Be steadfast in the truth which you are pledged to maintain and propagate; keep the ordinances of Christ, our only king, lawgiver, and judge, in the integrity and purity of their original institution, both as to form and order; be witnesses for God, in earnest zeal and meekness of wisdom, bearing testimony against the sins of the times, the defections in the Churches, and the advancing influence of popery; and seek to realize in personal experience, and to exemplify in all things, the full power of godliness, as men who dwell on high, and are waiting for the coming of the Lord.

Finally, turning to the mercy-seat, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Pray for me, and again I say farewell. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you and all the Churches.

I remain, my dear brethren,

Faithfully and affectionately yours in Christ Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 12th June, 1865.

The following resolution was unanimously adopted, all the members rising to testify their hearty acquiescence with its sentiments.

"RESOLVED,—That the ministers and messengers of this Association, assembled at Grundisburgh, on the 13th and 14th of June, 1865, do deeply sympathise with their venerable brother, Mr. George Wright, of Beccles, under those increasing infirmities which his advanced age and frequent bodily indisposition have occasioned him, whereby of late his pastoral labours have been greatly interrupted and diminished.

"More especially do the brethren deplore the necessity which has thus urged their beloved brother Wright at length to resign the secretariat of this Association; an office which for upwards of thirty-five years he has sustained with the utmost fidelity, ability, and earnest zeal, to the great advantage of the Associated Churches, and the honour of the denomination generallv.

"With unfeigned regret, therefore, the brethren have been compelled, by every affectionate regard for the present and future personal comfort of their aged and esteemed brother, to accept his resignation of the office so long and so faithfully held; that during his subsequent days he may be relieved of that portion of responsibility and labour which for so lengthened a period he has sustained with efficiency, and an affectionate regard for the interests of the Association. In fulfilling this duty, the brethren, on behalf of themselves and the Churches by them represented, most cordially and affectionately unite in an expression of sincere and deep gratitude to their brother Wright, for the long-continued and valuable services he has thus officially rendered to the Associate body. While, however, deeply conscious of the loss hereby occasioned to all the Churches, it is the devout and earnest prayer of the brethren that the present necessity may not preclude the advantages which, it is still hoped, may be derived from brother Wright's occasional presence and valuable counsels in the annual assemblies of the Association.

"Sincerely is it also desired that our beloved brother may be enabled, so long as he is in this tabernacle, by every available means, to stir up the Churches of the Association, by putting them in remembrance of those great truths of which for so many years he has been an able and earnest advocate; and that when his Divine Master shall call him hence, those eternal verities may sustain and cheer his heart in his passage to his ENDLESS rest."

Only once more (at Laxfield, in 1867) was our brother able to take part in any of these meetings; but to the end he ceased not to bear the interest of the Churches on his heart in prayer and in counsel from a distance. It will be fitting to conclude our review of his cherished connection therewith with the resolution passed at our meeting in June last. It is as follows :—

"That the ministers and messengers of this Association desire to express their sincere regard for the memory of their beloved and lamented brother, the late Mr. George Wright, of Beccles, whose removal to his heavenly rest has occurred since the last annual meeting.

"Cherishing the deepest affectionate remembrance of our departed brother, whose devoted services in connection with this Association—for many years its secretary, and a senior pastor among his brethren—it is with devout gratitude to 'the Father of Mercies' that we recall to mind his disinterested labours of love among us; the sanctified talents, the sober judgment, the wise counsels, and willing service which ever marked his union with us.

"Grateful to God that for so long a period the Association was favoured with his occasional ministrations, and his constant hearty sympathies, we bow with humble submission to the Divine will, which, for a few years during the latter period of his life deprived us of his personal presence in our assemblies, till at length, on the 7th of October, 1873, he slept in Jesus."

The resolution concluded by affectionately commending his aged widow and her family to the God of all grace, and also the Church for which he had so long laboured and cared; with an earnest prayer that the Association may ever retain the savour of those great truths, the earnest and able advocacy of which distinguished our departed brother.

LETTERS.

THERE is a peculiar charm in the letters of a good man, an intelligent and well-experienced Christian, who makes a conscience of what he writes, and who, without an idea of his correspondence being ever read by others than those to whom he writes, utters his thoughts with all the freedom of friendship, and from the depths of his own heart. With the consent of the receivers it can be no breach of confidence to make public such parts of his letters as have a common value to all in like circumstances. Indited by the spirit of God, they are common property to all the spiritually minded, and many hearts have ofttimes been taught and cheered thereby. May the Lord make the following selections from the pen of our departed friend an abundant blessing.

In speaking, as in writing, Mr. Wright's communications were distinguished for clearness and elegance of expression, weight and appropriateness of matter, savour and wisdom in treatment. In his correspondence he was happy in suiting his thoughts to the circumstances, trials and capacities of those to whom he wrote, in taking up these as directing indices to deep and profitable truths, and using them as channels to convey and fasten those truths upon

their attention, to lead them to "hear the rod and him that had appointed it."

To an esteemed aged Christian lady removing her residence to a long distance, he thus writes:—

"I was glad to find you had accomplished so much of your journey with safety and comfort. My heart has been often with you in your new encampment in the desert leading to Canaan, and I have kept you in remembrance at the mercy-seat with many requests like those in the prayer of Jabez (1 Chron. iv. 10). May the change in your earthly allotment, an allotment pre-ordained of God before you thought of it, be attended with all that is desirable in the fuller supply of the Spirit, and in your closer walk with God, that your latter end may be better than any of the former periods of your pilgrimage, with abounding peace and joy in believing, and in the triumphs of hope, and the sweeter foretastes of the rest that remaineth. Yet, whatever blessedness I may desire and ask for on your behalf before you reach the better country

> 'Where you will bathe your weary soul
> In seas of heavenly rest,
> And not a wave of trouble roll
> Across your peaceful breast,'

I cannot pray that you may be exempted from trial, because this would not be to pray according to the will of God, and because the trial of faith is a necessary incident in the life of faith, by which the heirs of salvation are exercised, for their establishment in grace, for their growth in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, unto holy fruitfulness. The words of Peter at this moment are brought to my remembrance, showing what the God of all grace will do for us after we have *suffered awhile.* 'But the God of all grace who hath called us into

his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.' (1 Pet. ii. 10.) Tribulation is the grace-prepared pathway of God's elect, who have peace in Jesus. He infallibly directs their steps, and leads them by a right way to a city of habitations; but it is a very observable fact in their history that when they are assured that they go hither or thither only as he appoints and commands, they meet with straits, difficulties, dangers, or other causes of trial, which they do not look for, and which in some moments of forgetful unbelief induce them to think they are gone out of the right way. I had occasion to touch upon this subject on Thursday evening in some comments and reflections on Gen. xii. 10. In obedience to the call of God, Abram left his country and kindred, and went to the land which was separated and set apart from other lands to be his inheritance. Not knowing whither he should go, he trusted with implicit faith in him who called him, and was conducted to the place to which he was to go as directly as if the country had been mapped out and laid before him. There he was favoured with renewed manifestations of the presence of God, and with assurances that the land should be his, and that a numerous posterity should descend from him to possess the land as their inheritance. Happy servant of God! How sure was he that his steps were ordered by the Lord. Yet here the means of subsistence failed, 'there was a famine in the land,' and he must needs go elsewhere, and the subsequent incidents of his journey, a journey divinely ordered and directed, are sufficient to show that the faith which follows the counsel and providence of God will be tried by the flesh, the world, and the devil. In every trial that awaits you, may the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush be with you, and the bush, though burning, will not be consumed."

Next month we find the same subject is continued in another letter to the same lady—the Hon. Mrs. Wodehouse.

Beccles, 3rd January, 1866.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I am glad that you find your change of residence attended with so much that is agreeable, and desire that he who hath led you thither will add to every comfort you enjoy abundant grace, so as to raise you above every temporal good and evil to himself as your all-satisfying portion. He will be our *all* when the heaven and the earth are passed away. "The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended," is a promise to be fulfilled to the Church in her forthcoming blessedness, according to the riches of his grace by Christ Jesus, yet it is also a promise to be realized in part while we are in the house of pilgrimage, by that heaven-given faith which is "the *substance* of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Whatever God will be to us in the eternal future, that he is to us now; our interest in him is the same; it is always so complete that it cannot be added to or improved: the difference of our assurance and enjoyment of that interest with regard to the present and the future is occasioned principally by the difference of our condition. Here we are in a course of training and discipline, and temptations, sins, sorrows, and cares often intercept our views of covenant mercies, and make us groan, being burdened, but when our appointed change comes, every hindrance to communion with God and to fulness of joy in his presence will be done away. This God is our God for ever and ever.

The conflict within, in consequence of Satan's raging

warfare against the soul and the active power of sin, which you now experience, is no strange thing which hath happened unto you. The trial, however distressing, is under the management of him whose you are, and who will not grant you an exemption, because he rejoices over you to do you good. The husbandman is pruning the branch that it may bear much fruit. Let your thought be stayed on him, and he will keep you in perfect peace.

I am, my dear Madam,
Yours faithfully in Christian love,
GEORGE WRIGHT.

As the pastor of a Church and a minister of Jesus Christ, our brother had deep soul exercise concerning the profitableness of his work, not satisfied with, not indeed specially aiming at that which is too generally regarded and rested in as "success," but seeking earnestly to be used of the Lord to gather in the chosen flock, and to feed them with the knowledge of the word, that his ministry as well as his example might also tend to their preservation from evil, to their purity in life and doctrine as vessels prepared for the Master's use. When for any length of time he saw not these signs, or when offences arose, unworthy motives appeared, and carnal practices prevailed, his heaviness of spirit was great. The interests of the Church were very dear to him, we believe dearer than any other object, and formed urgent matters for long and fervent secret prayer. He might justly have used the words of Moses, "God forbid I should sin against God by ceasing to pray for you." His work, however, was no hardship to him, and when blessed of God therein, and favoured to feel and see the tokens of his gracious power, it was joy unutterable. The following, with

many subsequent letters and extracts, will afford some light into the exercises of his soul as a minister of the grace of God :—

"It has been indeed an encouragement to me, in the long-continued spiritual conflict and trial which I have suffered, to know that my ministry has not been without some degree of power and refreshing savour to God's regenerated family. My days of labour in the service of my gracious Lord and Master have been my resting days, my days of light and gladness. In these favoured seasons I have been raised above my bodily weakness, and have at times spoken with a freedom and energy that would seem to indicate that I am not the feeble and depressed worm of the dust which I daily feel myself to be. So true is that precious declaration, 'He giveth power to the weak, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.' The seasonable help he has afforded me in feeding his flock has been to me a little reviving in my bondage."

OUR HIGH CALLING.

Southwold, 28th February, 1827.

MY DEAR FRIEND IN JESUS,

I am unwilling to give you any reason to think that I am not still desirous to keep up that spiritual intercourse between us which, through grace, I trust has not hitherto been unprofitable, at least not wholly so. I have been writing to Mrs. S—— and Mrs. B——, in the hope that the Lord the Spirit may bless what I have said. If you should have them upon your heart by any sweet pressure of the Spirit, when you are at the throne, pray that my pen may not have been used in vain. My soul longs for Zion's

glory, and for the spiritual and open union of Christ and his bride. I am jealous for him when I see how he is slighted by them that are called the friends of the Bridegroom; who, instead of living chastely with Christ and giving their whole hearts to him, are either dividing their affections between him and other objects, or are leaving him to defile themselves by an adulterous intercourse with the world. Yet I am not without hope that I shall yet see a Church of spiritual believers waiting with him in white, and some who are yet strangers and aliens "brought to the King in raiment of needlework." You have been brought into fellowship with him, and I hope are more or less sensible of it daily. Study to find out, or rather implore a revelation from above, that you may know what that fellowship includes and how far it extends. To me it appears to reach to all that he *is*, and to include an interest in all that he *has*, upon the very same title or deed of settlement by which it hath pleased the Godhead that in him should all fulness dwell. "Ye are complete in him," because the fulness of the Head must necessarily belong to his body, the Church, which is *one* with him. He does not hold his perfection alone or for himself, because he is not in any moment of time, nor date of eternity, separate from his Church. The whole grace and love of the Jehovah nature pitched upon him as the man of God's right hand and the firstborn of the elect family; and they were predestinated under him to attain a full fruition of happiness and communion with him, by sharing in his holiness, grace, and perfections, in a fellowship with him as brethren and "joint heirs." As he is, so are we now *in* him. We know this by faith under the Spirit's unction. We see—we feel—we rejoice, that as he is free from sin and its cause, and

stands justified in his resurrection state by his own everlasting righteousness, so are we free, and so are we justified. What shall we say to these things? "Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, YEA RATHER, that is RISEN AGAIN." But at present we see but little into this mystery. We know but in part. But the night is far spent, and the morning of glory will soon burst forth upon our darkened faculties, and in its full blaze, we shall know even as we are known, and be like our Head, for "we shall see him as he is." This is worth living, worth dying for. Considering what we now are with Jesus, and what we shall be hereafter, how dear, inestimably dear, should our beings be, with all the circumstances connected with them! What an invaluable boon is life which is destined to be spent in such rich grace, and to terminate in such a glory! And what should our days be but days of praise? We might have been brutes made to be destroyed. We might have been made vessels unto dishonour. But a being has been given to us, and is preserved that we may be swallowed up in the immensity of a Saviour's joy and grace. And if this is the reason why we ARE, what manner of persons ought we to be in holy walking with God? Oh, let us not think that we are of the world. Let us not waste our precious days in base and grovelling pursuits. May the Spirit draw us unto Jesus. May he compel you to give your whole heart unto him. Remember you are called to be his, and not another's. Is he all and in all to you. If you value him at any lower rate you do him an infinite dishonour. I shall be glad to hear that he has taken away your heart and lodged it in his bosom. May he keep it there till it is inflamed with love and joy, till all its raptured feelings say

--in the Church, the closet, the shop, the night visions, in life and the triumphs of dying—"My beloved is mine and I am his." Remember me to him.

Yours affectionately,

In his incomparable name,

MISS ANN KENT. GEO. WRIGHT.

TO A YOUNG DISCIPLE ABOUT TO "PUT ON CHRIST."

Beccles, 2nd January, 1843.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

It has given me great pleasure to learn from the letter you have written to your parents, and that which you have addressed to me, that you are inquiring the way to Zion with your face thitherward. I have written to Mr. Wyard by this day's post, and my heart's desire and prayer is, that as one who has obtained mercy you may be enabled, by the Spirit of Jesus, to witness a good confession before many witnesses, and enjoy among the Lord's redeemed the communion of saints. But, perhaps, before you are admitted to the sacred privilege you will be harassed and tried with many temptations. Satan will stand at your right hand to resist you. This adversary is permitted to try every chosen vessel. We read of one who, while he was yet coming to Christ to be delivered from the unclean spirit, that the devil cast him down and tare him. Thus the convinced and distressed sinner, who believes that

"None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good,"

is often cast down, and torn with anguish of heart by this cruel enemy. But the Lord will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear, and with every

temptation he will make a way for your escape. Fear not: the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. He who hath redeemed us by his precious blood is our *strength* and righteousness, and will save and deliver us in every trial. Be always looking to him and leaning upon him. When you are weak and ready to faint, you will find him mighty to save, his grace will be sufficient for you, and his strength will be made perfect in your weakness. When you see yourself most sinful and polluted, go at once, without waiting or seeking to be better, to the dear fountain of his blood, which cleanses from all sin. Applied by the Holy Ghost, it purges the conscience from dead works, and when this is felt we are filled with peace and joy in believing. In Jesus you will enjoy the smiles of God's unchanging love, and return and come to Zion with songs. I commend you to him who carries the lambs in his bosom. May his name be to you as ointment poured forth, and may the Holy Ghost seal you to the day of redemption.

I shall be glad to hear from you at any time. I have been lately in London, and was repeatedly near Great Ormond Street. If I had known you were there I would have called and spoken to you. Mrs. Wright, though not by me, will, I am sure, unite with me in kindest regards and best wishes. We are really interested in knowing that through sovereign grace you realize a covenant relationship to the eternal God, and can say, under the sweet evidence of the Spirit of adoption, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth."

I am, my dear young Friend,
Yours truly and affectionately in Christ Jesus,
GEO. WRIGHT.

MISS MARIA CHANDLER.

TO THE SAME, AFTER HER PUBLIC PROFESSION.

Beccles, 11th March, 1843.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

May grace be with you from the fulness of Jesus, to confirm your hope in him and your joy in his salvation. I had heard of your baptism before your letter reached me, and am glad that you have begun to taste of those pleasures which "none but Zion's children know." There are blessings promised to the heirs of salvation in their union and fellowship with the spiritual and visible Church which cannot be enjoyed by those who are without, every spiritual Church being a temple of living stones, builded together upon Christ the foundation, for an habitation of God through the Spirit. There his glory rests, and his goings are seen: he will bless the provisions of his house, and satisfy his poor with bread. It will be your privilege to wait always upon him when his people meet to worship at his throne. You will not always be blest with sensible communion, yet he will secretly strengthen you according to his word—"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Prize the solemnities of Zion; let nothing but circumstances which you can neither control nor avoid tempt you to be absent; for where should the children be but in their Father's house? They cannot expect his presence if they forsake the place where he delights to be.

The apostle says to believers, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is

gracious." I would give the same advice to the esteemed young friend to whom I am writing. As one of the "little children" brought to the birth, and whose sins are forgiven, seek your enjoyments in the grace and kindness of the triune God, from the knowledge and belief of the truth. The growth and prosperity of the soul are best promoted by continual meditation in the word, accompanied with prayer and dependence on Jesus, the Prophet of his people, for the unction of the Holy One which teacheth all things. In the light of truth you will see the salvation of God and the amazing riches of his grace towards you, and from his infelt presence and power in the testimonies and promises of his covenant, your fears, doubts, and darkness will be dispelled, temptations will be overcome, trials sweetened and sanctified; consolations will abound like streams flowing in the desert, and your heart will triumphantly respond, saying, This God is my God, my light, my joy, my glory. You will have boldness to enter within the veil by the blood of Jesus, and feeling your interest in the heavenly country and kingdom, you will be enabled, amidst the bustle of the city, to live and act as a stranger and pilgrim on the earth. I think I hear you say, Ah, this is what I desire. Well, the way is plain. Give up all things for Jesus; the desire shall be satisfied, and as one of his heaven-born witnesses he will make you stand with his sealed ones on Mount Zion, and call you to honour him by bearing the cross, and passing through tribulation to his kingdom. Our hopes of glory cannot be maintained but by denying ourselves and following him. Yet trials are the inlets of the pure joy of faith, and patience in suffering is the badge of the redeemed. Wear the badge, and wait patiently till he comes. If we suffer, we

shall also reign with him. Enough, this will outbalance every affliction.

My best wishes accompany you. May you be a disciple indeed, sealed to the day of redemption.

Yours truly and affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Faithfulness in the life of faith — patient, confident waiting upon God in loving trust, was a blessedness of which he had personally realized much, and constantly insisted on as the only way to glorify God, and at the same time realize that peace which the assurance of his wise watchfulness and tender unremitting care is alone calculated to give, while the ultimate object of the whole is kept in view. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." Here are a few extracts to this end :—

"I have remembered you at the mercy-seat, and requested that the Shepherd of the sheep will go before you, and lead you in the right way to some favoured spot, where he will satisfy you with his goodness. When I first read your letter a sweet verse of a very precious favourite hymn was brought to my remembrance :—

> 'Thy flock, thy own peculiar care,
> Though now they seem to roam uneyed,
> Are led or driven only where
> They best and safest may abide.'

It is part of our blessedness, as we live by faith, to know that the changes we pass through are predetermined by his sovereign will, and that they are so wisely adjusted in subservience to the ultimate purposes of his redeeming love that

they form a 'beautiful vicissitude,' so beautiful, indeed, that could we at once view the entire scene of our earthly pilgrimage, we should be filled with admiration and delight. Could we but abandon our innate selfishness, and quit the low region of flesh and sense, to realize God in everything, and meet him, clothed with majesty and grace, in his dispensations, events as they transpire would increase our knowledge of the excellence of his ways, and our communion with him. Every page of his covenanted providence contains a lesson which we should read and ponder till we understand it; and if we meet with dark and complicated sentences, Jesus, the willing teacher of his childlike disciples, will explain them if we ask him, and the explanation he gives will never be forgotten: the savour of his name will be in it. The unexpected notice you have received to give up the occupation of your pleasant cottage is not, I think, quite courteous, but it is best to accept it at his bidding. It is the rising of the pillar of cloud from the spot of the wilderness where it has rested, to signify that you must proceed another stage of your journey. 'Go forward!' is the command of Israel's God to you. 'Go forward, my pilgrim beloved; Canaan is near. My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.' You must, of course, feel some solicitude to know the exact direction you must take. Leave this with him. 'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.' Wait at the feet of Jesus, and as soon as he sees fit he will say, 'Rise, this is the way; walk ye in it.' Oh may you be led 'by the footsteps of the flock,' and be placed near some faithful shepherd's tent, where you will be able to sing with David, 'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He

restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.'

"It is always for our advantage to wait on him, and *for* him. We gain by waiting for him: faith, hope, and patience are strengthened by it; and mercy delayed accumulates and is more richly laden when granted. We live by faith, and are at the absolute disposal of that adorable being on whom we are dependent. It is right it should be so, and if we appreciate what he is to us in the everlasting covenant, we shall look to the issue of every dispensation with cheerful confidence, and in sweet assurance of hope. The saints of God are his workmanship, skilfully formed by his hand according to the image of his son; they are also the objects of his care. He has appointed their final destiny in the light, purity, joy, and glory of his kingdom, and ordained the means of its accomplishment. These are not precarious or contingent; what his love foreordained, his providence and grace perform. The great Triune God is the great actor in whatever concerns us. The life of every vessel of mercy, with its events and circumstances—that which passes within him, and that which passes without him—are the working out of love's design—as that design was, with perfect wisdom and supreme sovereignty of will, formed in the infinite mind of God—that each may obtain an expected end, and possess his incorruptible inheritance in heaven.

"This is the light in which every one who believes in Jesus should view himself; looking on the God of love as working all things in him, and all things for him. 'And if God be for us, who can be against us?' Afflictions may chasten and lay us in the dust; sin may cause ten thousand sorrows, groans, and tears; temptations and hell's puny darts may fill the soul with anguish and horror; but the

eternal God is still our refuge, and underneath us are the everlasting arms. He is ours in the thickest darkness, as well as in the sunshine of our brightest days. Our sole care should be to trust in him at all times, and rejoice that he is God, and beside him there is none else. The devil and our own hearts may suggest reasons against doing so which we cannot answer, but care cast upon God is the way to contentment, rest, and happiness.

"Happy will it be when we shall be so baptized with the Holy Ghost, and so filled with the fulness of God, as to realize God everywhere and in all things: God in our salvation, in our enjoyments, in the depths that would swallow us up: God at the throne of grace, in the household, in the sanctuary, in the bible — God for ever reconciled, God our Father, in the person of his Son, Immanuel, *God with us.*"

Soul conflicts, and exalting views of God resulting therefrom.—From a letter to Miss A. Kent, July 28, 1834:—

"How much am I the mere creature of circumstances; so much so, that I scarcely do anything as I ought to do.

"Sometimes my soul earnestly desires to live only for the glory of God. It seems to me desirable only to live wholly in the most entire self-denial, or rather self-annihilation, doing his will. Gladly would I spend my existence in labours of love and zeal, that his name may be exalted in the earth; but when I make the attempt, my weakness distracts and confounds me, and leaves me to mourn in secret, with bitterness and dejection, the extreme imperfection of all I do.

"For several weeks past I have suffered much bodily debility, besides many temptations from without. The trial

has been great, yet of late I have rejoiced, in some measure, in the righteousness of God in appointing it. Indeed, all his perfections appear to me as so many fountains of joy to us in Christ Jesus; while his infinity, immutability, and eternity impress me with the assurance that the joy is boundless, unchangeable, and everlasting. What he is to himself, he is to his elect. His glory is the inexhaustible source of our glory, and in his light shall we see light. 'Our life is hid with Christ in God.' Could we gaze in uninterrupted vision upon his unveiled excellencies, our souls would be ravished with sweet and overpowering love and delight. Creatures would appear as nothing to us, or be prized and loved only because they are the production of his hand, and display what he is. And oh! how happy should we feel in knowing that we are the subjects of his government, and that he has the entire and absolute disposal of us. Our wishes and desires would be limited by his will, and find their centre and consummation in himself alone. In a word—God would be all and in all to us. Well, such will be our blessedness ere long. We foretaste it by faith, and time is hastening us on to the full fruition. We are passing to it with an arrow's flight, it is near, inexpressibly near; the distance is only the span of life, and our passage to it is sanctified and made sure by the triumphant resurrection of our ascended Lord. Nay, already we are sinless, deathless, and glorious in him. The world may ask us the reason of such a hope, and we answer them plainly and confidently; our reason is God's reason, and the reason why he will make us so blessed is because he *wills* it, that he may gain an everlasting name; his declarative glory being the ultimate end of his purposes of grace."

Very fond was Mr. Wright of tracing *all* events up to the directing wisdom of the great Head of the Church. To an eminent member of the Church at Claxton, on the death of the venerable Job Hupton, he writes :—

"Glad should I be to hear that the Head of the Church had raised up one in his place, whose ministry would be acceptable to you and others who have been taught to prize the truth as it is in Jesus; but he sometimes withholds that which to us seems desirable and necessary; that we may become more dependent on himself, and learn from the want of other things that his fulness shall be to us an inexhaustible source of supply. The love which he bears to us, and which, like his adorable person, is the same yester day, to-day, and for ever, is in all its acts and dispensations under the direction of the most perfect wisdom: and his design in all that he does is to do that which will be best; that is—most effectually train the dear purchased of his blood, to a life of simple, unreserved, and submissive faith in himself. May you be often at his feet; and in the want of the external means of grace, which you lament, may he take you into his banqueting house, where you will joyfully realize that his banner over you is love."

GOOD CHEER.

"I cannot write much, but I am not willing to let your acceptable letter pass without acknowledging it. True, it breathes a little of the air of the wilderness, but it must needs be so, for the decree is gone forth, 'I will leave in the midst of them an afflicted and poor people.' This is the land of mourning and tribulation, but yonder is the better country, where God will wipe away all tears, and perfect our blessedness. The cross may be heavy, and the heart

oppressed with trials, but pure grace is at the bottom of all: by these things men live, and in all these is the life of the soul. Bleak cold, and storms of winter will soon be followed by the evergreen spring of glory. Be still, then, my brother, and wait patiently: all is well, and will be well with you. The affliction of your son may put your faith to the test—but the trial of faith is precious."

"Assure Mrs. W. of my sincere Christian regard and sympathy with her in all the sorrows of chastening dispensations, and the privileged blessedness to which she will be advanced by them under the precious influence of reigning grace. All will be well with us in the issue of our trials of every kind; and before that issue is realized, we may be well assured, from the faithful testimonies and gracious promises of God our Father in Christ, that even in the midst of tribulation all is well. 'Engraved on the palms of his hands,' we are not only safe from harm, but are also sure that all things are working together for our good. Oh for grace to acquiesce in all he does! If his ways are sometimes wrapped in clouds of impenetrable darkness, it is for the trial of our faith; it is an opportunity given to us to take hold of his covenant, and prove that it is all our salvation and all our desire. May you dwell on high, and the place of your defence be the munitions of rocks."

THE USE AND POWER OF FAITH.

"Thank you for your seasonable hint on the *power of faith*. It is a truth which I have been testing for many years, and have often felt the force, and enjoyed the sweetness of the assertion—

'Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, "*It shall be done!*"'

"Yet, assured as I am of the availableness of 'precious faith' in the word and promises of God, I find it difficult to believe so steadfastly as not to stagger; and, indeed, when any trial is more than usually severe and long-continued, it is the occasion of giving a painful discovery of the deep-seated infidelity of the heart; others are, perhaps, exercised in the same manner, and it is, no doubt, wisely ordered by him who is 'wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.' Our help is laid on 'the Mighty One,' and as faith is not indigenous to human nature, we are directed to look unto JESUS, as its Author and Finisher, as we must look to him alone for salvation. Blessed be God for this appointment and method of grace. It endears to us the name of Jesus, and makes it like ointment poured forth. May we be enabled to lean always upon him, and be daily receiving every supply of life, light, strength, and joy from his fulness."

To love as brethren—to have true fellowship in sorrow—to bear another's burden, is one of the deepest marks of the spirit of Christ. An extract from a letter written during a period of much physical weakness will afford one proof from many of the possession of this mind in large measure:—

"One thing in particular has given me so much uneasiness day and night, that I could find no relief but by giving myself up unto prayer. It is the case of an esteemed friend, who, I trust, is an heir of the grace of life, having formed an engagement with a view to marriage with a person who, I have strong reasons to believe, is a stranger to

vital godliness. The trial has been to me unusually distressing, yet it has not been without its benefits. In my pleadings at the mercy-seat, my faith has been sustained and encouraged by a succession of testimonies and promises presented to my mind, as I have thought, by the Lord the Comforter; and I am now taking my stand, like Habakkuk of old—'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch, to see what he will say unto me.' Appearances are, at present, against me, but 'great is his faithfulness,' and 'against hope' I would 'believe in hope, being fully persuaded that what he hath promised he is able also to perform.' The immutability of his counsel is the anchor ground of hope in every state; and when all things else fail, the word of the Lord endureth for ever. The Author and Finisher of our faith maintains it in the heart by means of conflicts and crosses; and as he is always attentive to his own work, so he keeps the end in view; and when we can see his hand in the things which we suffer, and can trust in his wisdom and love, we can abide in the furnace without complaining, and wait the issue in full assurance that when he hath tried us we shall come forth like gold. Happily, our interests—that is, our salvation, holiness, and happiness—are well secured in Jesus, our Head, and kinsman Redeemer, by a covenant that cannot be broken: all things are ours for ever in Christ. On this truth may we rest, realize it in daily experience, and enjoy the blessedness which so rich a possession is calculated to yield."

Here is a brief extract—in the very spirit of Rutherford—breathing solemnly fervent counsels to a young believer, the writer himself, at the time being in the earlier years of his ministry:—

"I rejoice over you, as one betrothed to Zion's husband in an everlasting covenant, and wish you nothing so much as increasing knowledge of him, and deep soul-communion with him. Cast all things aside for his sake; lay an embargo on your affections and thoughts, and forbid them to wander from your soul's beloved. To *think* of him is to commune with him; to love and delight in him above all others is to approach near to the happiness of the redeemed above. A thousand things will claim your attention in this busy world; allow them their due, but if they demand more, account them robbers, and rebuke them with, 'I am Christ's alone, and cannot serve you.' When you are engaged in business, pause now and then to indulge a few moments' meditation on him; tell him, in the inspiration of your soul, that you need his presence to cheer, his blood to keep you pure, his righteousness to cover, and his grace to preserve you. Account that day a lost one in which you forget him; let some part of your time be sacred to him; retire from every earthful scene to lean upon his bosom, to pour your wishes into his ear, to admire, adore, and enjoy him—*enjoy him!*—yes, that is salvation, that is heaven. And who can say how high we may rise in this celestial bliss in an earthly state? Oh, if we did not bring some idol in the heart—some dear deceit—what immeasurable joy should we have in fellowship with our Immanuel! If we could part with all things, he would be to us more than all.—*Live in Jesus.*"

A WISE AND FATHERLY LETTER RECEIVED SOON AFTER MARRIAGE.

Beccles, 26th August, 1845.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST JESUS,

I ought to have written to you long since, but am sure you will excuse my seeming neglect, when I tell you that it has not been occasioned by forgetfulness of you, nor by indifference to your happiness in the union into which you have entered, but it is to be attributed in part to that "heaviness through manifold temptations" which unfits the mind for intercourse even with dearest friends.

The conflict has been hard, the darkness such as might be felt, yet not without some momentary gleams of grace from Calvary. The completeness of redemption from sin and death, by the one offering of the body of Jesus, has cheered me; his blood cleanses us from *all* sin. But my soul longs for fuller liberty, for enlarged views of the glory of God in my salvation, and the sensible sealing of the Holy Ghost. True religion is not something *without* us; it does not consist of *external* acts and exercises; but it is the enjoyment of God by faith under the infelt sprinkling of atoning blood, and the indwelling of the Spirit. Christ is our life, and by our union with him we are partakers of his grace, and are raised to sit with him in heavenly places. But flesh and sense—the affections, cares, and will of the old man—clog and corrupt the soul and keep us grovelling in the earth. The sin that dwelleth in us wars against the law of the mind, and brings us into captivity. I have thought of late that, though we complain of this, and confess that we are vile, yet there are two of the active qualities of indwelling sin which we almost overlook, or at least are too slightly affected with; I mean its *deceiving* power, and its *hardening*.

It deceives us by its subtle, unperceived workings, hiding its deadly nature under the colour of something apparently good, lawful, or innocent; and it hardens by deceiving. It gains by stratagem what it cannot accomplish by direct assault. Whence is it that we are so cold, insensible, lifeless, and so ready to be at ease in the dead, "treacherous calm" of carnal quietude, when we are not conscious of being betrayed into any open act of sin? It is because we are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. How necessary then are the injunctions—"Watch and pray," "Keep thy heart with all diligence;" and still more necessary is the watchful care of Jesus, for "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Even the deceitfulness of sin may be turned to our spiritual advantage if we learn from it to have no confidence in the flesh, and to be always coming unto Jesus, who saves his people from their sins.

It is not too late for me to express my prayerful congratulations on your marriage; and if I abstain from the usual compliments of the world, it is because you and your beloved companion are not of the world. Joined together in spiritual affection as heirs of the grace of life, my first wish is that your union may, in the true sense of the word, be sanctified; that you may be helpers of each other's joy in the Lord, and that your mutual love as creatures may be strengthened and elevated by the superior affection you owe to each other from your supernatural relation as children of God by eternal adoption. May our God in covenant bless you both, and make your house a Bethel.

* * * * * *

I am, my dear Brother,
Yours affectionately in our Lord Jesus,

MR. S. K. BLAND. GEO. WRIGHT.

As a sequel to the foregoing, the following letter to another friend on a like occasion will interest and profit many.

Beccles, 10th December, 1855.

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER IN THE LORD,

The postman has brought me the silent messengers which you kindly despatched to inform me that your name was shared by another with you. Accept my congratulations on the union you have formed with one whom, I have no doubt, you have sought and obtained as a gift from the Lord, and who for this reason you will doubly esteem. If my poor faltering prayer will avail anything, grace, mercy, and peace will be with you to sanctify your union, and make you helpers of each other's faith and joy.

Marriage brings its blessings, trials, and duties. The first are sweet indeed when they are received and enjoyed as fruits and gifts of the covenant love of our triune God. They are not mere nether-spring comforts, but upper-spring mercies coming from the inexhaustible source of super-abounding grace, by the hand of our near kinsman, the Mediator of the new covenant. The *trials*, though not agreeable, are scarcely less valuable: they are but rougher forms, selected and shaped by One who cannot err, as the medium of some needed and desirable good which cannot be otherwise enjoyed. When exercised with them we are at liberty to go to the throne of grace and ask the reason why we suffer them; and if our gracious God does not give the reason, we may abide the issue with calm assurance that he means well and will do well, because his thoughts towards us are "peace, and not evil" to give us an expected end.

And with regard to the *duties* of the marriage state, I cannot but apprehend that they require a more habitual spirituality of mind and motive, and a fuller supply of the spirit of Jesus, than the saints in general are disposed seriously to consider.

Read prayerfully and frequently Ephes. v. 22—33, and 1 Peter iii. 1—7. Mrs. R. will permit me the freedom to say, do the same things. You will then understand my meaning; and in order that you may do what is enjoined, you will feel the need of being strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. In almost every undertaking ultimate success depends on right beginning. If you begin well, that is, by the willing consecration of your persons, dwelling-place, and business, with all its cares and interests, to the Lord, he will prosper and bless you. But in order to go on as you begin you must lean wholly on Jesus, as your strength to sustain, and as your wisdom to direct, and look to him for grace to sanctify. The life of faith which we are called to live consists in coming to him for all things; our failings and falls are occasioned by want of confidence in him, and when we have walked most circumspectly we shall be compelled to flee to the sinner's last resort—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all."

* * * * * *

Believe me to remain, yours in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

MR. F. D. ROBINSON.

To a widowed friend (Mrs. Stock, of Kentish Town) he thus seeks to convey some consolation from the true source:—

Beccles, 26th August, 1845.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You will not, I trust, impute it to forgetfulness that I have not written sooner to express my sympathy in the mournful bereavement which by a sovereign dispensation you have been called to suffer. My thoughts have been often with you, but I have found it difficult to bring them to paper before; and now what shall I say, but what by grace *you* have been enabled to say under the separating stroke: "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good"?

Precious faith views every event in its first cause, and sweetly acquiesces in the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God when that which we feared comes upon us. It is right, because it originated in his will; it is good, because it is a necessary part of the perfect mystery of his Providence, which will terminate in our everlasting bliss, and the fullest development of his declarative glory. The present link in the chain of divine dispensations may be that which we may wish had been left out of the inscrutable concatenation, but it will bring nearer that which we most desire. The everlasting covenant, which secures our salvation and contains all that the heirs of promise desire, is "*ordered* in all things;" and consequently our trials and afflictions are included in the arrangement—they are "*ordered*" in kind, degree, and season, and belong to the sure mercies of the covenant. Ever look at the present afflictive dispensation in this light: it will sweeten the trial, and enable you to bear your loss with cheerful resignation. I know, indeed, what you will sometimes feel; I know how the tear will involun-

tarily start when looking upon your dear children, and thinking that you are left alone to be the guide and guardian of their youth. But turn at once to the throne of him who is the husband of the widow and the father of the fatherless; commit yourself and them to his care, and he will sustain you. The God of their father will bless them.

What was the state of my respected friend's mind in prospect of the great change? I have no doubt of his acceptance in the Beloved, but I should like to know whether he was favoured with the supporting consolations of that gospel on which his hope was fixed, or whether, as is sometimes the case with departing saints, his last hours were clouded by temptation, and the sensible manifestations of God's unchanging love were withheld from his soul. If at any time you feel sufficiently at liberty to write me a few lines on these points it will afford me a mournful satisfaction.

With my love to your dear children, believe me to be,

My dear Friend,

Yours sincerely in the best bond,

GEO. WRIGHT.

MALACHI III. 16.

February 2nd, 1841.

MY DEAR SISTER IN THE BONDS OF GRACE,

It is a privilege for those who are journeying to the same heavenly country to commune with each other by the way, and when separated by distance to make the pen supply the place of the tongue. I have often enjoyed the communion of saints by this means with the sweetest freedom and divine unction, though, indeed, at other times my

hand would scarcely transcribe the confused and sluggish thoughts of a barren heart. If we have been with Jesus, beheld his glory, and found our discharge from sin and wrath in his finished salvation; if we have been enlightened, drawn, and sealed by the Holy Spirit; if the testimonies of God have been more precious to us than gold; if we have been led—in conflict, temptation, and affliction—through paths that we knew not, and in the end proved that God was with us; if the promises have sweetened the waters of Marah, we cannot be at a loss for a subject of spiritual converse, and yet we know that thoughts and words refuse to spring without the renewed anointing of the Holy One. When our helplessness is thus felt it tends to the mortification of self, and as self is mortified and abased we learn to live by faith alone, and come to the mercy-seat as petitioners and supplicants. It is our blessedness to know that nothing happens in vain. Every circumstance and event in our existence is absolutely and unalterably predetermined in the counsel and love of our covenant God. The pathway of tribulation in which you are ordered to walk is his path, and as you proceed in it you set your steps in the prints of his feet. I need not tell you he is and ever will be with you. Regard him as your Father, and go to him with every want and care. Tell him what you desire, and he will grant it. Claim your right to all things in Jesus, and be assured he is too just to refuse that to you which is made yours by the eternal settlements of grace. Pray for me, and believe me to be,

Yours in the sweet ties of Christian love,

GEO. WRIGHT.

THE WILL OF GOD AND ITS WORKING.

Blessed be God, he doeth as he pleases. It is right he should. If it were possible, I would not for ten thousand worlds have anything relating to me, the Church, or the world, controlled and determined by any other will than his. His mind is supreme in intelligence, power, and goodness, and our highest blessedness consists in being likeminded with him in his counsels and designs. All the disquietude we suffer is occasioned by the opposition of our wills to his. The fault is ours; it lies in our perversity and self-idolatry. He is right, and we are wrong. Happy is the man who can *rest in the Lord.* He will bring us to this sooner or later. It is the point he pursues in fulfilling the purposes of his love. If there be apparent severity in the chastisements he inflicts, this is the reason for the severity; and as soon as with childlike submission we fall at his feet saying, "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt," the rod drops from his hand, and with an ineffable smile he replies, "Thou art mine; thou shalt be for me and not for another." Our present path of tribulation will conduct us to his blissful presence, for who are the palm-bearing company nearest the throne? 'These are they that *came out of great tribulation* and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.'

We are hastening to join them. The wheels of time turn rapidly; another year is ending, and "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Be watchful, let your loins be girded and your light burning, and if you are not permitted to enjoy those means of special grace which your soul longs for, go within the veil by the blood of Jesus, and be happy and fruitful in his presence. The streams of divine ordinances and Zion's ministry may be dried up, but

the fountain is full and flowing. Be content with your Lord. Tell him with your whole heart *he* is all you want, and he will bring you into the banqueting house. Pray for me.

Yours sincerely in our ever glorious Head,

GEO. WRIGHT.

JAMES HARRINGTON EVANS AND HIS BIOGRAPHY.

"I am reading the memoir of Mr. Evans with pleasure and profit; I have been refreshed again and again by it. In the light of so much excellency, such spirituality, such love, such a readiness to communicate truth and instruction to others, I feel mournfully ashamed of my own barrenness. With his last recorded exercises of mind I can fully sympathize, and adopt what he has written, or rather dictated, as my own. The darkness, depression, and desolation of spirit occasioned by the infirmities of the body and manifold temptations, leave me nothing to find rest in but the finished work of my adorable Lord and Saviour, nothing to sustain my hope but the sovereignty of mercy, and the free and absolute promises of the everlasting covenant, given to us through the blood ransom of the incarnate 'Word.' What a refuge is Jesus to us in every state; what a rest when weary; what a source of supply in every time of need; what rivers of water in a thirsty land! May the gracious indwelling of this Holy Comforter make our souls like a watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters fail not."

In a letter of early date—1830—Mr. Wright treats of his own conflicts of soul, and of the sublime truths into the understanding of which these painful but wholesome exercises were the means of leading him:—

"I am beating against wind and tide, and though I am not afraid of shipwreck, because matchless grace has embarked me in the ark of the everlasting covenant, which must and will bear me in safety above the billows of sin and tribulation, and shelter me in inviolable safety in every tempest and storm; yet the want of spirituality, zeal, love, faith, wisdom, which I bitterly experience, discourages me, and has almost induced me to quit an office for which I feel myself so very unfit. No one besides myself knows the bitter and almost insupportable conflicts which I suffer on that account. Little do they know what they are doing who make me sometimes an offender for a word, and pass their censures on what they do not understand. To a mind already oppressed such a proceeding is a tenfold burden. But I would not complain; it is not of chance: eternal wisdom has selected and sovereign love ordained every stroke that gives us pain. My best enjoyments have usually been wrung from the cup of affliction. All is well. In the hand of a covenant God even the rod will blossom with hope, and drop with the balm of strong consolation. His dispensations, however painful, are invariably regulated upon the footing of his absolute, discriminating, electing, and never-failing grace in Christ Jesus. Each trial originates in an eternal decree of unmingled goodness, and is administered by the hand of the 'Prince of Peace.' He brings each to its birth and close, and assigns its degree and duration."

PURCHASED BLESSINGS.

"His precious blood has removed the penal cause of our sufferings, and by giving them a beneficial and salutary tendency and issue he teaches us to view in them the sovereign efficacy of Calvary's transcendent merit; for the

cross not only atones for sin and clears us from the curse, but the dignity and Godhead of our suffering surety confer upon it an infinite value, and have made it the medium of the highest benefits, the legally procuring cause of a glory infinitely surpassing our conceptions, and which it does not appear we could have had a righteous title and equitable claim to upon the mere ground of his having made *satisfaction* for sin, and paid the debt we owed under the first covenant. Redemption from the law and its curse by the justifying righteousness and expiatory blood of the Lamb is a privilege and benefit of incalculable worth, but if we associate the idea of infinite merit with Redemption it rises higher in our estimation, because it then appears to be not only the means of delivering us from all evil, but of giving us a *right* to the utmost good which we can enjoy or hope for. The fruits of redeeming love are evidently superior, in an almost immeasurable degree, to the highest happiness and blessings we could have attained by a perfect obedience to the law; and to what should we attribute that superiority but to the merit of that blood? If we can enter aright into this consideration of the cross, what a view shall we obtain of the riches of electing love, in which our redemption by the incarnate God originated; and with what confidence and triumph shall we wait at the mercy-seat for the treasures of an everlasting covenant, seeing that they are ours, not only by the *gift* of his grace, but by the award of perfect justice through the entitling merit of our great High Priest!

"Recumbency on Jesus is the issue and life of faith. Some distinguish this from assurance. I cannot comprehend the distinction; if I lean upon him I know it, as assuredly as that I am now leaning upon my desk. No objections or reasonings can dissuade me that assurance of a higher or

lower degree is not of the issue of faith, or, in other words, that faith is not evidence.

"I commend you to our divine Lord. Seek him. Be free and familiar with him, treat him as an infinite confidential friend—you will not be more free than welcome. Let your life be out of the world, while your hands are in it. Shun the society where Jesus is not all in all."

THE TEMPORAL POSITION OF A MINISTER.

Towards the close of his ministry Mr. Wright thus reviews the principles that actuated him at its commencement relating to temporals, and their result—in a letter to a confidential and valued friend :—

"When I came to Beccles I made no stipulation about money payments for my services, because I resolved not to be a hireling, and being assured that if I was the servant of the Lord he would provide whatever was needful. The gratuity which I received from the Church was not sufficient, but I had no reason to complain; it was not the will of God to supply me from this source, but from time to time, with intervening seasons of privation and distress, he gave me what he saw best in the form of unexpected donations and several unexpected small legacies. The trials we endured, though attended with many sorrows, have been some of my most valued mercies, for if I had not been exercised with them I should not have known so much of God, his counsel and his ways, nor the nature of a life of faith; nor could I have so fully sympathized with the poor and needy of his flock, so as to comfort them with the same comfort wherewith I have been comforted of God. And now in old age, though our income is not large, yet, with the limited wants of plain living, we have enough, and are exempted from those

worldly cares which pressed so heavily upon us. Great is his faithfulness, yet one want still burdens; it is the want of a thankful heart for so much mercy."

In another letter Mr. Wright continues and very sweetly enlarges upon this salutary topic :—

"The Lord dealeth bountifully with me; I am a debtor to mercy alone; but while I owe all that I have to him, I am not the less sensible of the kindness of the hand which he uses to communicate what he has to give. Oh for a grateful heart to him for all his goodness, and to them whom he makes his ministers to serve me! The nether springs of Providence have flowed freely to me, and often through channels that I had no thought of. During the years of my pilgrimage I have seen unnumbered proofs of his care: prayer in the time of need has been signally answered; in straits and difficulties he has surprised me with unexpected interpositions, and on the waymarks of the past 'Jehovah Jireh' has been legibly written—

> 'The mount of trial is the place
> Where he displays surprising grace.'

Being, as I believe, appointed by him to feed 'the flock of slaughter,' and to comfort and help onward his afflicted and poor people, he trained me for the service by the various chastenings of a scanty, insufficient income, and by reducing me to wants which compelled me to turn to the mercy-seat, and wait there with cryings and supplications till he arose and helped. After travelling from Southwold to Beccles, a distance of twelve miles, every Lord's day for between five and six years, to preach the word of life and salvation, I felt it desirable to be freed from my worldly engagements, and concurring circumstances indicating the guiding hand of God, I resolved to remove. While revolving this matter,

the question naturally occurred to me, 'How shall I provide for myself, wife, and five children?' The answer given, with some degree of power and sweetness, 'Seek ye first my kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' It was enough. My care was taken away; I was at rest in God, and with this divine passport in the hand of faith, I came from the place where I was to the place where I am. It was an eventful crisis, and as I was reaching it one pressing exigence was in my way; it gave new birth to prayer, and while I was spreading it before the Lord, the Holy Comforter enabled me to triumph by faith over the difficulty, which I knew not how to surmount, by bringing to my remembrance the last words of David, 'Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.' The word of faith was soon realized, so far as it related to the trial with which I was exercised, and became a providential fact. He will ever be mindful of his covenant. Nearly forty years have now passed away since I received my passport of faith from the roll of the covenant; and remembering all the way in which he has led me I have reason to say, 'True and faithful is thy word, O Lord, the God of my hope.' We have, indeed, had a large portion of tribulation, and our straitened circumstances have filled and oppressed the heart with bitter sorrows. We have been penniless again and again, and notwithstanding the most rigid frugality and the hard-working care and prudence of my invaluable helpmate, to whose simple-minded integrity it was distressing to owe any one anything, we were sometimes embarrassed with debts; yet by one means or other our wants were supplied, and now we have full proof that my passport promise has not failed."

THE NEW YEAR.

In a letter to a friend (1869) Mr. Wright thus alludes to one of his wise pastoral habits, which was, without doubt, often made by the Spirit of the Lord a blessing. As the days of the year came and went, memory would recall the "new-year's word," and its influence for consolation, instruction, or correction, in righteousness would be the result :—

"For many years I have been accustomed at the beginning of the year to give to my beloved people some short portion of Scripture, as a kind of motto to be retained in memory, or as a password of faith in their journey through the year. Last evening it was '*Pray without ceasing.*' I have reason to believe that a blessing was in it, and many received it with gladness. The mercy-seat is our best place. May we abide at it, and give ourselves up unto prayer. We shall then be filled with good things."

THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST.

"Local distances and the cares and occupations of earth are great interruptions to communion between the members of the heaven-born family, but happily neither these things nor anything else can sever the relation which has its centre and root in Christ Jesus. We are all one in him, and from his headship all spiritual blessings shall descend to every member of the mystic body in the rich current of redeeming blood and merit, till the purpose of eternal love shall be consummated in the presentation of the whole Church to her incomparable lover and princely Bridegroom at his coming. Then we shall be like him ; the sorrows and imperfections of mortality and time will be done away, and our fellowship will be joyously complete."

SELECTIONS FROM CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER.

Beccles, October 2nd, 1852.

MY DEAR SARAH,

Remembering that to-morrow will be your birthday, I will anticipate it with my sincere congratulations—not such as pass under that name in the customary compliments of this world, but my best wishes that, as years glide silently and swiftly away, you may enjoy more richly and increasingly the blessedness and hopes of assured salvation, as a vessel of mercy afore-prepared unto glory. And this, indeed, you may expect and will realize if you are united to Jesus, and have so learned to live by faith in him as to seek all you need from his fulness. The interest we have in him entitles us to all that he possesses: rich as he is he holds nothing as his own apart from them that are his; and we are in a course of preparation to participate in his unsearchable riches, if we feel and acknowledge that we *want all things in the want of him.* Make it your daily concern to know more of him, and to live more entirely with him; and when you are enabled to esteem and delight in him above every other object, you will adopt, in sweet assurance of faith, the language of the Church: "My beloved is mine, and his desire is towards me." The prospects of the future will brighten with hope, and you will

"Read your title clear to mansions in the skies."

In the changes to which you have referred in your note, the trial of your faith may be intended by him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; but take the matter wholly to him, and lay every care and burden on him. 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' The dispensations

of Providence, which in human judgment may seem to be adverse, are as necessary for the accomplishment of the all-comprehending plan of covenant mercy as those which directly fulfil the promises. We have nothing to dread under the dominion of our heavenly Father. It is our highest wisdom to resign ourselves with entire confidence into his hands. Whatever may be the issue of changing circumstances, follow the direction of his word, "trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths."

Your ever affectionate father,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 2nd October, 1858.

MY DEAR SARAH,

It is but seldom that I take my pen to write a letter on Saturday afternoon—first, because I do not think it right to employ the Post-office on Lord's day; and next, because I want my time for other purposes which I cannot postpone. But as a letter posted to-day will not be delivered to you till Monday, I must not let the post slip without expressing my kindest congratulations and best wishes for you on the anniversary of your birth. Since you first entered, a little stranger, into this world, I have never ceased to pray for you, that you might be among the saved of the Lord; and I believe I need not assure you that advancing years have not abated my affectionate interest in your temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare. These birthday congratulations must, however, soon cease; and if, through unmerited grace and redeeming blood, I shall be admitted into a mansion in the Father's house, I shall

hope to welcome you to a dwelling near me; and the distinctions of father and daughter will be lost in the higher relation of children of God according to adoption. Till then, may you walk in the light of his countenance, rejoice in his name, and be exalted in his righteousness.

Your ever affectionate father,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 2nd October, 1861.

MY DEAR SARAH,

To-morrow being the anniversary of your birth, you will have my kindest wishes, and, if the spirit of the Lord wills, my prayer at the mercy-seat that the God of your life may crown it, and your following days, with marks of his distinguishing favour and love. It will be your jubilee birthday: may you not only enjoy every earthly good which a covenanted Providence sees needful for you, but the richest benefits of gospel grace, typified by the jubilee year in Israel.

In the jubilee year every debtor was discharged from the claims of his creditor; every bondman became free; the poor Israelite who had sold his inheritance was restored to the possession of it; all hands ceased from labour, and the land had entire rest, and the joy of the people was general. These privileges were significant of the privileges of God's redeemed people, who are called by his word and spirit to believe in Christ Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, "full of grace and truth." They are fully acquitted of their law debts, as sinners to the justice of God; they leave the servitude of bondmen, for the liberty of sons; they obtain an inheritance of grace and glory, infinitely better than that which they forfeited or sold by sin; they enter

into rest by faith, and return and come to Zion with songs and with everlasting joy upon their heads. May these precious blessings of the gospel jubilee be yours. The jubilee year was ushered in by the blowing of the silver trumpets; and the true jubilee of the ransomed of the Lord is realized only under the ministry of a pure gospel, which proclaims salvation as an absolutely free gift, attended by the omnipotent grace of the Holy Ghost.

Your ever affectionate father,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 2nd October, 1866.

MY DEAR SARAH,

I must not omit a line or two to assure you that I do not forget your birthday, though I may not have anything to add to the congratulations and good wishes of bygone years. It is pleasant to keep up remembrances of this kind; it refreshes kindred feelings, and strengthens family ties. Fifty-four years have soon run out; this length of time, in the backward view, seems like a tale that is told, and as a dream when one awaketh; but they have been so many years of the long-suffering patience of God, who has borne with our sins;. and if, moreover, he has put those sins away by the precious blood of the Lamb, and will not remember them any more, they have been years of mercy and grace, whose worth we shall not be able to estimate, till we realize their fore-ordained issue in our perfect glorification in the everlasting kingdom of God. My desire is, that your birthday may be lightsome and blessed; that you may enjoy the full assurance that you are the Lord's by eternal adoption; that your name is written in the book of life by the pen of electing love; and that grace from the bosom of the Father,

through the blood of Jesus, may be so shed upon you that you may, throughout the day, enter within the veil, and with a heart filled with wonder, love, and gratitude give utterance to what you feel, in words like those of that eminent saint and servant of God, Mr. Toplady, who well understood the reasons why he should live in the joy and triumph of faith :—

> " A debtor to mercy alone,
> Of covenant mercy I sing;
> Nor fear with thy righteousness on
> My person and offerings to bring;
> The terrors of law and of God
> With me can have nothing to do,
> My Saviour's obedience and blood
> Hide all my transgressions from view."

The future is unknown to us; we cannot say how long we have to live, nor need we care to know how long. Whether the boundary line, beyond which we cannot pass, be near or distant, my wish and prayer is that you may walk with God, and wait in the patience of hope for the great change, and for the coming of the Lord. All you want by the way is provided for and settled upon you in the everlasting covenant, and will be given to you in the time of need. Your right to all is in the free grace of God, and the redeeming merit and justifying righteousness of the Lamb of God and Lord of all. May you daily feel this, and account it your happiness to be an absolute pensioner on Providence and grace, till you come to the swellings of Jordan, and—

> " hail the glory dawning
> From Immanuel's land."

Trials will indeed come; but, with all my wishes for your happiness in future days or years, I do not wish you

to be exempted from them. They are needful, they are indispensable, come from whatever secondary cause they may; and they issue not from the throne of judgment, but from the throne of grace; and, if beheld by faith, and accepted with full acquiescence in the all-disposing will and wisdom of God in Christ, they will prove to you, in blessed experience, as so many golden links in the chain of covenant mercy.

Deut. xxxiii. 25—27; Rom. viii. 28—30.

Mother joins with me in kindest love and best wishes. Remember us in kind regards to all yours.

I am, my dear Sarah,

Your ever affectionate father,

GEO. WRIGHT.

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2 SAMUEL XXIII. 5.

Beccles, March, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Though existing circumstances produced depressing feelings and unfitted you to write with the cheerfulness which would have been grateful to you, your letter was not the less welcome, as I was waiting and wishing for some intelligence from you. . . .

Knowing and believing as we do that our God in covenant worketh *all* things according to the counsel of his own will, we are assured that whatever happens in the dispensations of his providence which crosses our desires, and seems to be against us, is not adventitious, but was fixed by the just judgment of him who never errs. In his all-comprehending mind there is always a perfect reason for whatsoever comes to pass; we may form some conception of this, though we

may not be able to discern the exact reason for any trial we may be now passing under; but, "what we know not now we shall know hereafter." Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

We are coming to the light, and when the darkness is passed away we shall see the beauty of God in all his ways. In the mean time, and through all life's vicissitudes, we shall find the happiest advantages arising from the unreserved submission of the mind and heart to the disposing will and wisdom of God. This state and habit of the mind and heart will enable us to bear with fortitude and the patience of hope every afflictive circumstance with which we may be visited, however severe, and however it may seem to be contrary to that which we have thought desirable. The word of God to you and Mr. Robinson, in the place of your earthly pilgrimage where you are now resting, is, "Be still, and know that I am God." He will be with you in the deep waters, and they shall not overflow you. The sure mercies of the everlasting covenant are adapted to every condition, and they are all yours in Christ Jesus. Look daily into this treasury of all grace, till you are satisfied, and trust in the covenant love of the eternal Three in One, for all its promises. My daily prayer is that the Lord will direct to the right means and remedy for your dear husband's restoration to health. I need not assure him of my kindest regards and fraternal love in Jesus.

In my best wishes and prayers,
I am, my dear Friend,
Yours in Christian love,
GEO. WRIGHT.

MRS. ROBINSON.

TO THE HON. MRS. WODEHOUSE.

Beccles, 13th June, 1866.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I could wish, if it were consonant with the will of God, that I could keep up a closer correspondence by pen with distant and beloved friends in Jesus, with whom I have enjoyed fellowship in the Spirit; but the want of the unction of the Holy One, and frequent heaviness through manifold temptations, lay an embargo on that free flowing of the heart which gives freshness and savour to letter-writing. This is one hindrance which I feel; but it is not the only one. The failing of mind and memory, and the want of elasticity in the hand, incidental to old age, make me sluggish and keep me silent when other considerations should prompt me to write, looking only to him whose strength is made perfect in weakness.

Temptations, infirmities, trials without and within, enter more or less into the daily experience of God's elect, and are a wisely-ordered discipline by which he trains them to live by faith. The flesh may desire to be exempted from them, and induce us by its corrupt reasoning to think that they are against us, and we should be more in the way of true happiness if we were left at ease. But this is wrong: he chastens us for our profit, and reproves and checks our reasoning, by saying with majesty and tenderness, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." This should quiet us, and teach us to "rest in the Lord:" he thinks well, and means well. Have we not learned that the most painful dispensations of his Providence have issued in bringing us away from earth's broken cisterns to a fuller submissive trust in his care, and a more

steadfast hold of the everlasting covenant? And have not our inward conflicts, our castings down, and the desolation of heart we have suffered because of sin and the hidings of his face, been so over-ruled and overborne by truth and grace as to make us feel our need of Jesus, and to realize by precious faith that in all we need, he, in his person, love, righteousness, blood, merit and grace, is all we need? I might add, he is *more* than we need—for he is given not only to be to us a fulness to make good the destitution, and to supply the wants of our fallen condition, but to be to us a superabundant fulness of grace, that we may be raised to a supercreation state of blessedness, and to a glory which we could not have attained if sin had not entered. All this is ours, and by believing we become possessed of this all-fulness, and I cannot desire for you, my dear madam, anything more blessed than that you may so believe, and find through life, in death, and for ever, "Christ is all and in all."

Faithfully yours in Christ Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 9th August, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I beg you will accept my thanks for your acceptable and welcome note, and for your encouraging observations on the manner in which the ever-blessed God has favoured me in my Sabbath day's labours. The seasonable help he has afforded me in feeding his flock has been to me a little reviving in my bondage. Months of temptation, darkness, and depression have been appointed me, and still the trial continues; but I will not trouble you with a recital of my conflicts and sorrows. We know from the faithful

Word that it is only IF NEEDS BE that we are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Our times of affliction and sadness fall within the arrangements of covenanted love, and in the sanctifying hand of the Holy Comforter they are the blest occasion of withdrawing us from every worldly influence, and of laying us in deeper abasement at the foot of God's throne. We have yet to learn the full design and value of tribulation, but we have learned enough to know already that it has been the medium of our choicest mercies. The most wasting and heart-stripping dispensations are the outsteppings of God's providential wisdom and love, that he may establish his covenant with his chosen, and give them an expected end. When a cloud covers his throne and the soul is in thick darkness, the sacred and precious promises are ripening for our use; and when faith shall have passed its trial, and patience have had its perfect work, the cloud will be dispersed, the sovereignty of unchanging grace will shine forth with fresh lustre, the Lord will be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning will be ended. Let us, then, wait only on God, and commit our way to him. How safely may we do it! and did we fully apprehend what he is to us, in the dear person of his anointed, "Immanuel, God with us," how triumphantly should we do it.

In sincere Christian regards and esteem, yours,

GEO. WRIGHT.

TRUE CHRISTIAN UNION.

"I am glad to take my pen to assure you how much I appreciate your epistolary communications, as one beloved of the Lord. With the world I can have no friendship; it is only in the communion of saints that I can find that which is congenial and agreeable. Grace will unite in heart those

who are one in Christ Jesus. They have common sympathies, interests, and aims, and live in expectation of the day when their association will be perfected, and they shall go out no more. It was not without some feeling of hallowed pleasure that the patriarchs of old anticipated death as the period when they should be gathered to *their own people.* Who were their own people but the people of the saints of the Most High, who had obtained their destined inheritance and rest in heaven? The patriarchs died in faith—they died as they had lived, embracing the promises, and trusting in the faithfulness of God to perform them—and it seems that they regarded their being gathered to their own people as an essential element of their future blessedness. The union of all the children of God, with the Lamb in the midst of the throne as their Head and elder brother, must be followed by their glorification with him; and their glorification will not be merely individual, but as members of one body, as children of one family, as the aggregate multitude redeemed from all nations, comprising and constituting one Church—the Bride elect of the heavenly Bridegroom. There we shall have one Lord, one source of ineffable joy; and there all the sanctified minds of the righteous will behold with transports of praise the glory of the Triune Jehovah, in its ever-increasing development, in the salvation of a number which no man can number. In the mean while we may so receive the supply of the Spirit of Jesus as to know that we are come to the glorious assembly and Church of the first-born; yet our pilgrim state on earth will be ever that of privation rather than fruition, and the fellowship of the saints can be but infrequent and imperfect. In your seclusion you are almost shut out from it; but being brought where you are by the afflictive visitations of Providence,

it may be you have some service of love to perform for those who are dear to you. May the precious Comforter be with you, to give you an overflowing cup of joy in fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, and inspire your tongue to speak of God's salvation continually." —*April 16th*, 1858.

OUR APPOINTED SERVICE.

Beccles, 29th September, 1858.

My dear Madam,

My heart's desire and prayer is that grace, mercy, and peace may be with you, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our happiness to know that so complete is the provision made for us in the everlasting covenant, and so exactly are its mercies adapted to our earthly condition, both in time and measure, that the supplies of grace are always equal to our actual requirements. It has fallen to your lot to have the care of two suffering invalids, and in this position, and with this charge committed to you, you will learn some lessons, needful in the life of faith, which you could not so well learn in any other department of the school of God. He who has loved you with an everlasting love, and placed you among his children by eternal adoption, has selected for you the form you occupy, that he may instruct you with a strong hand secretly. It is, indeed, in affliction; but it is not the less valuable, nor will it be the less advantageous on this account. He chastens us for our profit, and when he hath tried you—that is, perfected the purifying process of the Refiner—you will come forth like gold. It is pleasant to believe and to feel that we are just what he would have us be; and that in all our

vicissitudes he is working out his purpose towards us in Christ Jesus. "All things are of God;" and every movement of his Providence is in the right direction. May you, my dear madam, enjoy the pure blessedness of being of one mind with him; and may you be kept at the foot of his throne, saying from the heart, and with the calm acquiescence of precious faith, "It is well." With equal sweetness and sublimity Dr. Watts, in one of his beautiful stanzas, has said—

> "Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
> And vexed with trifling cares,
> While thy eternal thought moves on
> Thine undisturb'd affairs."

Soon, very soon, will these "various scenes" be gone; the shadows are passing away, and we shall see the morning glory of the heavenly world. Arrayed in the righteousness of our Head, and by the power of his resurrection, we shall overcome death and the grave, and rise in the joy of our emancipation from the flesh into full communion with him—

> "Where all his beauties they behold,
> And sing his name to harps of gold."

In the mean time may we be kept watching and waiting for the coming of the Lord. His coming is the hope of the Church; and it will be our "blessed hope" also, if we are severed from the world, and preserved as a chaste virgin unto Christ. When his name is to us like ointment poured forth, our longing hearts will cry, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."

Remember, my dear madam, that Christ is all and in all to you, by the gift of the Father's love; seek to apprehend

this daily by faith. Abide in him, and may the Holy Spirit, the glorifier of Jesus, help you to sing exultingly—

> "Possessing thee, I all possess—
> Wisdom and strength and righteousness,
> And holiness complete;
> In thy great name I dare draw nigh
> Before the Ruler of the sky,
> And all his justice meet."

With much respect and esteem,

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

THE VALUE OF "FIERY TRIAL."

"How impenetrable are the ways of God to us, till he is pleased to remove the cloud that covers his throne and conceals his design. He answers us 'by terrible things in righteousness,' and the discipline by which he trains us for himself may, by its seeming severity, fill us for a time with confusion and dismay. I am willing to conclude that the wasting heart-trial with which I have been so long exercised may be the select means by which eternal love is preparing me to realize the rich joys of that faith which triumphs always in Jesus, his finished work, and all-sufficient fulness. I need not tell you, my dear madam, that the triumph of faith is not to be gained by a life at ease. There must be the infelt battle with unbelief before we obtain the victory, and the conflict must precede the triumph. The great difficulty is to give up the battle to the Captain of our Salvation, and let him fight it for us, while we rely solely on his strength, and wait at his feet to take the spoils. Of all the evils of our fallen nature, an evil heart of unbelief is the most uncontrollable by us, and the most offensive to God. It is full of all subtlety;

it will put on a thousand forms, and if resisted in one will present itself immediately in another, and so on, day by day, till we are wearied with the warfare, become dejected and desponding, and question whether our spot is the spot of God's children, and whether we ever knew the grace of God in truth. Why should we be thus tried? For many reasons which I cannot enumerate, but for two in particular; in the first place, to teach us that we have no inherent grace to depend on; and in the next, to make us understand, experimentally and practically, that the adorable Son of God, Immanuel, *God with us*, in whose name alone there is salvation, is THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH. This is a lesson we are long in learning, and we cannot learn it speculatively; it is learned by manifold temptations—in the furnace, and under the rod; and precious, beyond gold, is that trial, however deeply it enters the soul, that is made the sanctified means of bringing us to Jesus, and of keeping us depending on him for *faith*, as well as for that eternal life which is given by absolute promise to him that believeth. It is just as we are taught by the effectual workers of God's gracious power to come to Jesus, and lean upon him for everything we need, that his name becomes to us like ointment poured forth. Even the desert within shall blossom and rejoice if we are but drawn to him, and the dreariest desolation of the heart shall give place to joys unutterable and full of glory."—*February 15th*, 1856.

ALL FULNESS IN JESUS.

"Under the reign of Jesus, I hope it is your daily blessedness to live daily in fellowship with him, and to participate largely in the ministration of the Spirit. This is the design of our calling. The Headship of Christ is the

foundation of our salvation, and the unfailing source of all our spiritual supplies. This is the rock of the righteous, that yieldeth fruit, and its fruit is perennial, though in the winter of temptation, when the heart is blighted and shrivelled by unbelief, we can scarcely discover any fruit pleasant to the eye on our own sapless branch. The completeness which we have in him never varies; there is not a moment of time when he is not to his accepted people what he was from everlasting constituted and made, 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' This is the truth which we are called to rest in by faith, even when, as to all sensible enjoyment, we see not our signs. But believing against feeling is the embarrassing difficulty we have to grapple with in the life of the inner man; and it is this, above all things else, which convinces us that our faith can stand only in the power of God. 'Looking unto Jesus,' so as to look away from everything beside, may seem an easy precept, and so it is; but when we try to carry it out practically we become conscious that simple as the precept is we can obey it only as it is given unto us, in behalf of Christ, to believe in his name. Our cry from the depths of the soul's infelt impotence must often be, 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.' And it is sweet to know that we may ask of him that which we have not in ourselves, and come to him for the faith by which we are to live upon his righteousness, blood, and grace. May the precious Comforter reveal to you all the ineffable excellencies and love of Immanuel, and so assure you of your living union to him, as to enable you to say with holy joy and adoring wonder, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his: my beloved is mine, and *his desire is towards me.*'"—*September 16th*, 1856.

FREE GRACE IN CHRIST.

"It is mercy, or rather it is something more than mercy, it is love superabounding and sovereign, to be debtors to mercy for everything through every period of time. The heaven of God's elect would lose its highest blessedness if it were not a heaven of free grace. It is his will that it should be so, and therefore not one shall ever be debarred from it, because he cannot take with him some works of righteousness to clear and establish his title to it. Such, indeed, is our sinfulness as long as we are in the body, in consequence of the unchanged and unalterable nature of the old man, that it pollutes our holiest services and purest motives, so that we need a free forgiveness and the precious blood of the Lamb of God to take away the guilt. What we need is always ready for us, and always in sight of him with whom we have to do; and when we are burdened and oppressed, even to wretchedness, with the body of sin and death, there is no condemnation to us who are in Christ Jesus. Our justification by grace is as complete and irrevocable as the grace that justifies; and it can never be lessened or lowered by any of the evils of our fallen nature, because it is quite independent of any good or evil that we do, and stands exclusively in him whose name is 'The Lord our Righteousness.' May the Holy Comforter, who testifies of Jesus, so witness this truth to us that it may be our continual resting-place in all our sins and sorrows. Patience must have its perfect work in the quiet endurance of our conflicts and temptations; and it will be well for us if it be so—for the patience to which we are called is the *patience of hope in Christ Jesus*, who will turn our sorrow into joy, and bring forth his grace in vivid outstanding relief on the dark ground of our sin and ruin, by saving us to the utmost to

the praise of his glory. Oh may we be found in him and be possessed of all we want in him, who is and ever will be to his beloved Church, 'all and in all.'"—*September 26th*, 1866.

SELF SEARCHED AND GOD REMEMBERED.

Beccles, February 15th, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

When I read your note I felt my heart melt in sympathy with you in the temptations and conflicts you have suffered under the chastening of the Lord; and when you said that it had seemed to you that you knew nothing, you exactly described one part of my own trial: such was the void, the entire emptiness, which in some sad moments I experienced, that I feared I had deceived myself, and was not what I professed to be. But was I, after all, deceived? The question forced me back on the past. I remembered the way in which the Lord had led me for many years, and I saw in the review such signal waymarks of mercy, prayer answered, promises fulfilled, and the seasonable interposition of Providence in times of danger, difficulty, and distress, and, moreover, I recollected that in some sweet seasons of my pilgrimage the name of Jesus had been to me as ointment poured forth, and at others I have exulted in the excellency of God's ineffable sovereignty and dominion, and for days and weeks have lived in happy assurance of the truth, "The Lord shall be thine everlasting light," and from these recollections I thought I might safely and without presumption adopt the reasoning of Manoah's wife, Judges xiii. 20. And is not this one of the right uses of bygone experience? If the heart be dreary and desolate as the parched waste of the desert, and sorrows of a full cup are

wrung out to us, forgetfulness of the past acts of God's distinguishing kindness and love will give Satan an advantage over us, and make the waste heart more desolate. When David in dejection and disquietude said, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," he remembered "the hill Mizar," his faith revived as his thoughts touched on that spot, still bright with the beams of manifested grace, and he immediately added, "Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." If he has been gracious, he will still be gracious; for he is of one mind, and his mercy shall be built up for ever. The things which we now suffer will prepare us for the richer joys of a life of faith. We do not yet know the full worth of much tribulation, nor how deeply grace is inlaid in our afflictions. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." "When he hath tried us we shall come forth like gold." We lose nothing in the furnace but that which we desire to lose; and it is very heart-cheering to know that Jesus himself is the Refiner, and is preparing us for his own use. Let us then turn to him, or at least cast ourselves at his feet. We cannot wait on him, or believe in him in vain. Sooner or later we shall joyfully and triumphantly realize that, whatever our state, he is in every state our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. All that is needful to be done to save and sanctify us he will do, that he may present us to himself without spot or blemish. And this he will do because he hath loved us and given himself to us. The gift of himself to us in the entire devotedness of his love, is more than a pledge that he will save us to the utmost. And what can be more pleasing or acceptable to

him than that we should cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and wait in full assurance of hope for the consummation of his engagements! On him may the blessed Comforter help us to rest by precious faith, then shall we have perfect peace, and our joy will be what it should be, a joy in him for what he is in himself, what he is to us, and what we are in him.

I desire to remember you at the throne, praying that you may live in fellowship with the best beloved.

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

MRS. KETT. GEO. WRIGHT.

A MESSAGE TO ONE IN SORE AFFLICTION.

Beccles, 2nd October, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

It would have given me sincere pleasure to have heard a more encouraging report of your health, and of your consolation in Christ, than I have received from time to time from Mr. Bachelder. Yet I know that you are under the care of One who, in the greatness of his love, has chosen and prepared the furnace through which you are passing; and when he has tried you you will come forth like gold. The process may seem long when we are suffering the fiery trial; but it is lengthened only because it is needful, and were it terminated sooner it would not be for our benefit. What you so anxiously desire, the dear and joyful assurance that God is your God, and that you are his child by eternal adoption, is in reserve for you; it is yours already in promise, and your present affliction is the way in which he is leading you to its realization. "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is

refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." This is the promise; rest on it; it is true and faithful. Look not to yourself for the reasons why you should embrace it, but to the Promiser himself; and in hope against hope believe, being fully persuaded that what he has promised he is able also to perform. For his own sake he will do it. The comfort of the promise can be enjoyed only by faith. If you are embarrassed with the fear that you are not the Lord's, cast yourself as well as you can at the feet of Jesus, and pour out your complaint to him. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, till he hath sent forth judgment unto victory. Our help is laid upon this mighty One; and we cannot expect too much from him. But if we would receive any good at his hand, and obtain grace from his fulness, we must come to him as we are, guilty, vile, helpless, depressed with ten thousand fears, without any evidence whatever of our calling and election, if we have none, and he will in no wise cast us out. If we cannot go to him as children he will not refuse to receive us as sinners. Disease of long standing is cured by touching the hem of his garment; and every unclean spirit is cast out by his word. The mystery of a life of faith consists in trusting Jesus for all things, and trusting in him *just as we are.* His office is to save, our place is to look for help. "If," said the excellent John Berridge, "evil tempers arise, I go to him as some demoniac; if deadness creeps upon me, I go a paralytic; if dissipation comes, I go a lunatic; if darkness clouds my peace, I go a Bartimeus; and when I pray I always go a leper, crying as Isaiah did, 'Unclean! unclean!'" To him I

would commend you. May he be to you as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. I shall be glad to hear that you can say, "I have found him whom my soul loveth."

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

MRS. KETT. GEO. WRIGHT.

WHOLESOME SUGGESTIONS TO AN INVALID.

Beccles, 1st June, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

It will give me sincere pleasure if your brief sojourn in Lowestoft prove beneficial, and be the means appointed by our ever-gracious God of recruiting your strength. Health is so valuable and precious, that of all earthly blessings one cannot but desire that it may be enjoyed by those whom we love and esteem. Yet in the all-wise economy of Heaven's free and superabounding grace, the diseases and weaknesses of the body are ordained and administered to the heirs of salvation as the necessary means—in subordination to the atoning blood of Jesus, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit—of making them partakers of benefits and blessings more valuable and precious than health. Let us not forget that "he chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of HIS holiness"; and what is HIS holiness—or that which he gives from HIS own fulness—but the soul's health, the soul's meetness to hold communion with the triune God, and to realize with ineffable delight the blessedness of that communion when death shall be swallowed up in life? How far does it exceed all human thought and calculation that the effects of sin—which we groan under, in the pains and sufferings we endure—are by the provisions of

the everlasting covenant sweetened by grace, and transformed into blessings, which when rightly appreciated excite our admiration, gratitude, and praise! Be assured of this, my dear madam, that your heavenly Father does nothing, nor permits you to suffer anything, but for the purpose of showing you in the end how freely, infinitely, unchangeably he loves you. It is purifying love that wields the rod and heats the furnace. Perhaps you doubt. Depressed with temptation, burdened with sin, and distressed with unbelief, you anxiously inquire, Where can I find in myself the spot of his children? Where is that holiness which should be the fruit of chastening affliction and sorrows? May I answer the inquiry? It may be that all within is dark and discouraging. Whence is this, but because the ever-blessed Spirit is taking the veil from your heart; and why is it, but that, from a full consciousness of your entire helplessness, you may be brought as one having no claim on divine mercy, to commit yourself, in faith's sweet recumbency, into the hands of Jesus, assured by the gospel, as the testimony of God, and consequently unquestionably true and faithful, that to you, a sinner believing, he is made of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption? Thus believing, you will have the evidence of your adoption, and find, by blessed experience, that all holiness, or the soul's conformity to the will of God in obedience and submission, consists essentially in a life of faith upon the Son of God. I can wish you nothing better than that you may come up out of the wilderness leaning upon him as your beloved.

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

FELLOWSHIP IN AFFLICTION AND IN HOPE.

Beccles, January 10th, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You are often on my mind, and I cherish the hope that the Providence which has directed you to a physician who so fully understands the nature of your disease, with its appropriate remedy, will give efficacy to the means and restore you to health. We may not, indeed, trust too much to human skill. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," nor are the ablest physicians alike successful in every case to which their attention is directed. But if it was not by chance that you heard of Dr. M ——, of whom you had no previous knowledge—which I am sure you fully believe—will not the hand which has guided you to him employ him as his chosen instrument to give you "health and cure"?

February 2nd.

I had written thus far under the first date, and intended to fill up my paper the next day; but as soon as I laid down my pen symptoms of pleurisy came on, which were followed by a confirmed attack of the disease which has enfeebled me. I have since suffered inflammation of the right eye, which is not yet recovered. My repeated ailments of late show that the outward man is decaying and the time is drawing near when I must quit the earthly house of this tabernacle. Be it so; it matters not, if I may but take possession of the house not made with hands.

Excuse me for saying so much about myself. My object was rather to remind you that, though, from the nature of your disease, your progress towards recovery may be slow, the dispensation is such as the unerring wisdom of your Father who is in heaven has chosen and ordained

because it is best adapted to carry out his purpose of love to you. However long the trial may be continued, you may with perfect assurance say, "*It is well.*" My heart's desire is that such may be the utterance of your heart. All is well which he does; but faith must have its trial, and patience its perfect work. Rest in the Lord, and he will satisfy you with his goodness. He has a sovereign right to claim from us the absolute submission of our minds to his ordaining will, and when we yield that submission we find a fulness of blessedness in God which cannot be interrupted by external circumstances, however afflictive. The furnace may be kept burning, but he sits as the Refiner who knows the value of the silver, and intends that it shall lose nothing but its dross. Remember that in all your affliction you suffer as a member of Christ's body, and that by your union to him his grace will be sufficient for you, his righteousness is your righteousness, and his name entitles you to the sure mercies of the everlasting covenant. I cannot write much, or I would dwell gladly on your free grace interest; but for the present, and day by day, I would commend you to the Lord.

Yours in Jesus,

MR. ROBINSON. GEO. WRIGHT.

THE REAL BLESSEDNESS OF LIFE.

Beccles, April, 1853.

I have been so much tried with one of the usual returns of my old ailment as to be scarcely fit in body or mind to do anything. But, all thanks to the God of my mercies, the more distressing symptoms are now abating, and I cherish the hope that by steady perseverance in the means which have been prescribed I shall regain, if not

perfect health, at least such a degree of it as will enable me to spend my future days in more active, ardent, and pleasurable devotedness to the service of my redeeming Lord. I seek health of him only that it may be sanctified and spent for his glory; and should he not grant this precious and desirable benefit, it is enough: he cannot do wrong, nor dare I complain of what he does. There is something better in reserve, and if I could in truth say, day by day, "the King hath brought me into his chambers," I should think all infirmities and suffering as a feather in the scale against the blessedness of dwelling in his presence. But, indeed, the way which he takes with his own is often rough and troubled: temptation, sin, and unbelief disturb our quiet, and till God the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, fixes the heart wholly in Jesus, and maintains in us the sweet assurance that he is ours, and we are his, we cannot enjoy "perfect peace." Still, blessed be his name, the gospel is a full, authentic warrant from heaven to encourage and authorize us to place our entire dependence on him as our Prophet, Priest, and King, who will ever exercise those offices so as effectually to secure our salvation, sanctification, happiness, and glory, and constrain us to cast our errors at his feet in wonder, love, and praise. May you, my dear madam, rest in him with the reigning, triumphant persuasion that in the want of all grace he is all the grace you want.

The memoir of the Haldanes has afforded me much pleasure and profit. While reading it my spirit was stirred within me, and I could almost envy them in their zeal and labours. My pleasure was heightened by the union I felt with them in the truths and principles which guided and governed them in their holy enterprise. I am greatly indebted to your kindness for putting so rich a treasure into

my hands. It is rare to meet with a volume so full of incident, and so illustrative of the care of a superintending Providence, and the mighty influence and happy efforts of sovereign grace.

With my sincere desire that you may daily sit down with our exalted Lord in heavenly places,

I am, my dear Madam,

Yours in Christian affection and esteem,

GEO. WRIGHT.

ABIDING IN CHRIST.

When I wrote my last letter to you I offered some remarks on the knowledge of the sin that dwelleth in us as an evidence of true sanctification. The subject, at that juncture, was uppermost in my thoughts. The truth of what I stated is clear and unquestionable; and it is desirable that it should be well understood by the heaven-born heirs of salvation, that they may know their spot is the spot of God's children. When other evidences of their calling of God by Christ Jesus are clouded, this may, at least, keep them from fainting—like a broken piece of a wreck upon which the mariner lays hold to preserve him from sinking in the mighty deep, till some friendly help shall take him safe to shore. But the broken piece is not the life-boat, nor the frame and feelings of the heart the ark of safety. Apart from, and above everything of this kind, Christ, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is the only and all-sufficient ground of our confidence and hope, and of abiding peace with God. When we receive him, in and by the word of grace in the gospel, which exhibits him, and is the appointed means of conveying him to us, all guilt, with its misgivings and fears, gives place, and the prophetic

promise is fulfilled, "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Happy would it be if we could abide in this assurance; there is every reason we should, for what Christ is to us at one time he is at all times, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." But, like Israel, we forget our resting-places; and from the subtle and unobserved workings of our deep-rooted self-righteousness, which is always antagonistic to the life of faith, we quit the rock, and are tossed with tempest and not comforted. Abiding in Christ is the secret of true living; it yields substantial comfort, enables us to embrace the promises, gives us liberty at the throne of grace, fortifies the mind for the endurance of afflictions and trials, and makes us confess that we are strangers and pilgrims seeking a better country, that is, a heavenly. "Abide in me" is the imperative injunction of his love, and with this may be coupled the exhortation of the apostle, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."—*February 10th*, 1869.

FELLOW PILGRIMS TALKING BY THE WAY.

Beccles, September 9th, 1853.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I have had to regret that so long a time should elapse without writing to you; but as my hand is recovering its usual steadiness I am glad to take my pen and resume my intercourse with one whom I esteem as a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. The grace which has prepared our inheritance and eternal rest, and ensured our possession of it by an immutable purpose and covenant, has chosen our path in the

wilderness, and irrevocably appointed every event and circumstance of our pilgrimage. This may well cheer us in the most trying scenes, and when darkness that may be felt is about us. How calm and resigned was the spirit of Job when, broken with breach upon breach, he said, "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him." How triumphant his faith when, unable to gain access to God, he looked above and beyond his trials and discouragements, and anticipated the issue of the dispensation: "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth like gold." Why may we not do the same thing? Believe it, my dear madam, the bitterest ingredients in your cup were prepared and cast in by him who rejoices over you, to do you good. Your redemption by the blood of the Lamb exempts you from every kind and degree of penal suffering for sin; and your eternal adoption into the family of heaven entitles you to all the rights and privileges of the sons of God. Let this, with the great and precious promises, be your warrant to wait only and always upon God, and to expect all good from his paternal love. The prayer of faith will remove every burden from the heart. Yet we may have to endure our sharpest conflicts with a distrusting, recoiling heart of unbelief, when we attempt to come to the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat within the veil. All the dear saints of God have felt this. If we ask the reason why, it is sufficient to know that the sweetest heart-rest is enjoyed after the greatest heart-trouble; and our God, who is the God of all grace, will make us know the value of his mercies, by leading us through a preparatory course of temptations and sorrows. Be our conflicts what they may, and though hope deferred may make the heart sick, the immortal bow about the throne,

the set token of the everlasting covenant, encourages our approach, and assures us that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give us an expected end. In a little while the kingdom and *patience* of Jesus will become the kingdom and glory of Jesus. Rest in the Lord, and may his perfect peace keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ.

In my best wishes and prayers,
I am, my dear Madam,
Yours sincerely in Jesus,
GEO. WRIGHT.

THE DISCIPLINE OF FAITH.

"It is the pleasure of the Lord to keep me still in the crucible; yet I am assured that he is too wise, and too rich in mercy, to continue the trial one moment longer than is necessary. During the process I can see little but dross; yet I would be still, and patiently wait the issue. 'When he hath tried me, I shall come forth like gold.' The trial of faith is precious, and its preciousness is most fully proved by the severity of the trial. I feel I can speak freely upon this point to one who has passed through much tribulation. We have been made to know that if we are the Lord's, and because we are his, he will not let us settle upon our lees. He will empty from vessel to vessel, till we find full satisfaction in himself alone; and will break down and scatter to the winds every under-prop of sense and feeling, that we may rest on the rock which cannot be moved, Immanuel, God with us. The flesh covets self-dependence, and betrays us into it, in a thousand ways which at first we do not discern; but grace, working by faith in the word of salvation, maintains its

antagonism against the flesh, counteracts its operations, and brings us sooner or later to realize, by happy consciousness, that we have all we want in the person, fulness, and finished work of the Son of God. The great struggle within, under whatever form it appears, is to decide which shall have the ascendancy, self or Jesus, the first Adam or the second Adam. The issue of the conflict is not doubtful; it was settled in the everlasting covenant of the ever-blessed, independent, and immutable Trinity; but as all our leanings are to the idol self, the Antichrist within, it is not surprising that we are pierced through with many sorrows, and suffer the excruciating pains of mental crucifixion, before we are brought to the happy extremity of simple faith which enables us to say, with the heart's joyful feelings, 'I am nothing, worse than nothing, a sinner, loathsome as a leper; but Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is MY ALL AND IN ALL.' May the Holy Spirit give us this Christ-exalting faith, and maintain it day by day, that our joy in the Lord may be full."—*January*, 1856.

PEACEABLE FRUITS.

This is an imperfect state, and we are often reminded how much the communion of saints is broken and interrupted by the various afflictions and changes with which they are exercised. Yet if we realize our oneness in Jesus, the Head of the Church, we can, in full assurance of hope, anticipate the period when the communion of all the living sanctified members of his body will be perfected, and in the mean time we can look on the circumstances of our earthly pilgrimage as the result of a wise ordaining love, selected, arranged, and fixed with a view to our highest ultimate

happiness, and the manifestation of the glory of our triune God.

The life of faith which we are called to live is, and ever will be, opposed to and above a life of sense; and in order to its advancement we shall find that what is most agreeable to the flesh, and the flesh most naturally craves and covets, will be withheld from us. We must be taken from the broken cisterns, that we may come to the fountain of living waters, that we may drink more freely and largely of them, and be satisfied. It is the sovereign pleasure of our heavenly Father to admit us to the fruition of himself, and his boundless love, in the person, righteousness, blood, and merit of his dear Son; but in order to this self must be denied, and we must be stripped of our own wisdom, strength, and glory, and become nothing, and less than nothing, in our own esteem. This is one of the lessons which the God of love has of late been teaching me; and sometimes the discipline which he sees needful to make me understand the lesson has been by terrible things in righteousness. But whatever may have been the suffering I have endured, I would rather it should be repeated and increased than lose the intended benefit of the discipline. Love—unmingled, unmerited love—inflicts every chastening stroke. It must be so, for there is no wrath remaining in the bosom of our God, because Jesus purged our sins, and drank up the bitter cup of his indignation when he died. Yes, our purification from all sin was then accomplished; our faith adds nothing to the fact, but trusts in it; and by trusting in it we have perfect peace. May it be given to you, my dear madam, as well as to your unworthy correspondent, to see that you are free from all sin, in the atonement of your dying Surety, and to stand always before God with joyful

liberty, as a child greatly beloved, a child for whom the Father has not an hour of displeasure in reserve.

Believe me to be,

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

June, 1856. GEO. WRIGHT.

And thus the exercises of his soul were not borne with a blind or forced passiveness, but rather with an anxious searching into the cause, a listening for the warning sent by every stroke, a cheerful readiness to obey.

April 18th, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

When I read your last welcome note I could scarcely refrain from tears, so fully did I sympathize with you in the conflict and heaviness you suffered through manifold temptations. The description you gave of yourself so exactly agreed with what I had experienced, that I was enabled to bear you in remembrance, again and again, at the throne of our heavenly Father, with some encouraging hope that you would find in the end that you were only passing through that course of chastening discipline which he saw needful to take you away from every kind of self-dependence and self-satisfaction, to a life of entire reliance on the grace given to you in Christ Jesus alone. My intention was to have written to you very soon, to express my hope that you would gain much by the things which you suffered; but from an attack of influenza, followed by a relapse into my old ailment of more than usual severity, I have been too enfeebled and depressed to do what I wished to have done. Believe it, my dear madam, that if we would "go by the footsteps of the flock" the hand of covenanted love will lead us in the path of affliction and

tribulation; and the most painful, desolate, and dreary part of this appointed path lies concealed from every human eye. It is from the breaking up of the secret depravities of the heart, the turning of our comeliness in us into corruption, that we may be dislodged from every hold of self-complacency; and from the misgivings, distrust, and perverse reasoning of unbelief, that we suffer our bitterest grief, dejection, and disquietude. As far as my own observation goes, there appears to be an almost universal propensity in God's regenerated and beloved children to seek to be strong in the grace that is in them, rather than in the grace which is in Jesus Christ our Lord; and because they do not find in themselves all the holy effects of grace which they hoped and desired to experience, they think they do well to be sad. This is an error, and an evil to be corrected; and corrected it will assuredly be, by "the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning," whose searching and consuming ministration will exhaust and dry up every source of inherent comfort and joy; and then, when we find that we are wholly void of all good, and carnal, sold under sin, he will perform the office of Comforter, by taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto us, that we may derive all our satisfaction, peace, joy, hope, and triumph from what Christ is to us, and what we are in him. (1 Cor. i. 30, 31, iii. 21-23; Col. ii. 10; Song ii. 3, 4.)

If you are not yet brought to realize this, wait in hope; be much at the mercy-seat; look to Jesus as given to you in the word, and when he hath tried you, you will come forth like gold, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh. Rest in the Lord,

Yours sincerely and affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

As one well skilled in the meaning of affliction, he was accustomed to speak of it in no ordinary, vague, or self-pitying way, but as of a wise discipline for a gracious purpose.

8th August, 1854.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Repeated attacks have kept me in such a continued state of debility and depression that I have been unfitted for letter writing, and when at times I have thought I would write to you, my mind has seemed so utterly vacant that I have laid down my pen without accomplishing my intention. Even now I feel but little better. This, dear madam, has been a long and dreary chastening; my spirit has almost fainted in it, and my sad experience has resembled, in my own apprehension, Jonah's state (chap. ii. 2), and that of Heman, described in the eighty-eighth Psalm. Yet, blessed be God, I have been occasionally, though but for a short season, revived and cheered by some gleams of precious truth, so that there has arisen light in the darkness; and I do cherish the hope that the consumption decreed will overflow with righteousness. The hope that I have for myself I have for you also, believing that in God's inscrutable movements you have been brought into the same dry and joyless wilderness of temptation and desertion. Oh let us wait on him, who, when he chastens and lays us low, and turns our comeliness into corruption, yet waiteth to be gracious; "and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him," Isaiah xxx. 18. The trial of faith is precious, though painful; it is the fruit and evidence of adopting love; and grace, in the person of our divine Purifier, sits at the furnace, and his

faithful word assures us that we shall gain what we have desired and prayed for when the trial is perfected. First, he will, by the sweet manifestations of his love and the sealing of the Holy Ghost, acknowledge that we are his people, and our hearts shall gratefully and joyfully respond "the Lord is my God;" and being thus brought through the fire like gold that is purified, we shall offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Zech. xiii. 9; Malachi iii. 3.)

At present our business must be at the mercy-seat. The most signal manifestations of the love of the triune God are usually preceded by manifold temptations and fervent effectual prayer. But I think I hear you say, "I would, but cannot pray. When I attempt to draw near to God and make known my requests, I can only utter words, while my heart is unfeeling and unrelenting as the rocks." Be it so; yet the desire to pour out the soul to God is prayer, and indicates a life within that cannot be satisfied with anything less than himself and the clear shining of his grace. If you were not made alive unto God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, you would not thirst for God, nor be distressed because you seem not to have access to him. And though your want of feeling may induce you to conclude that your prayers are too heartless to be accepted and answered, yet bear in mind that the God of all grace does not make our feelings the ground or the rule of answering prayer, but his own good pleasure, and the free and absolute promises of his covenant, which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, to his own glory by us. My heart's desire is that our mighty Redeemer may turn your captivity and send the Comforter to abide in you for ever.

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Mr. Wright's severe mental conflicts, augmented, and possibly sometimes originated, by physical infirmity and depression, were, however, not only a sure means of grace to himself, but enabled him to comfort others with the solid consolation he experienced in his own soul, or, if not so much as that, at least to direct them to the sure source of consolation. In February, 1854, he writes to a friend:—

"For many sad and dreary weeks and months I have suffered so much spiritual conflict, and such a waste and desolate state of heart, in consequence of manifold temptations, that I have been as one shut up, and unable to write anything worth communicating to those whom I love and esteem for Jesus' sake. Again and again have I intended writing to you, and as often have I felt myself in the same kind of imprisonment of mind; nor have I yet found a way of escape, but am waiting as a prisoner of hope; and as I doubt not that there has been a 'needs be' for this long trial of faith, so I trust that when the gracious design of the 'Purifier' is accomplished I shall come forth like gold.

"It has been his pleasure, too, to cast you again into the furnace, not, perhaps, of mental trial, but of bodily affliction, having the same gracious end to bring about, but by a different process. The vessels of his choice must be fitted for his use; with unerring wisdom he selects and appoints the discipline best adapted to each, and after a little while he will bring them forth furbished and brightened with the lustre of true holiness. The everlasting covenant of the triune Jehovah settles and ensures our every interest, redemption, santification, happiness, and glory, all in union with the ever-precious Immanuel. What can we desire more? Happy

should we be if we could always repair to this covenant as our resting-place. Hither, my dear madam, may the blest Comforter bring you day by day, and help you, in the sweet consciousness of your completeness in Jesus, to anticipate the nearly coming period when, as the result of grace given you in time, you will realize for yourself, with adoring wonder and joy, that 'the righteous shall shine like the sun in the firmament, for ever and ever.'

LOVE TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY WITH A FEEBLE BODY.

"The state of my health requires that I should have nothing to do; entire rest, and especially mental rest, is the best remedy, and my friends have kindly engaged to allow it me by getting supplies for my pulpit for four or five weeks. This I trust will be beneficial, and that the God whom I serve will renew my strength. If life be continued, I desire to spend it to his glory. My soul longs for the full fruition of his love. He is my refuge, my hope, my joy, when all things else fail, and when sins and temptations assault.—1848."

"I thank you, my dear Sarah, for your many kind considerations about my health. I feel the propriety of what you say; but the painful impression I have of the Laodicean state of the Church, and my habitual anxiety for its revival, impel me to labour in the ministry of the word at any sacrifice rather than indulge myself in the ease which my health seems to require. Prudence may dictate a different course; but I am not my own: my life, with all its energies, belongs to the Church according to the appointment of my ever-gracious Lord; and duty imperatively binds me to spend it for the great object for which I think it my

happiness it should be devoted. If the feeble taper burns out in attempting to kindle a flame in the sanctuary, it will, I trust, shine with purer brightness in the temple above. There is a sweetness and pleasure in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and feeding the flock which he has purchased with his blood, which amply repay all toil. Last Lord's day I preached with difficulty in the morning; in consequence of bodily debility, mind and memory were enfeebled and embarrassed; but in the afternoon at the Lord's table, and in the evening, while having as my theme, 'This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend,' Song v. 16, I was helped to speak with deep feeling, clearness, and earnestness, and I hope not without effect; and I closed the day under a grateful sense of the Lord's goodness. This is a thousand times preferable to sitting still.—1849."

"My mind has been more than usually barren of late, so much so, that I have found it difficult to think clearly, connectedly, and comprehensively upon truths and subjects which I have attempted to illustrate and enforce in public. This has been a trial to me; yet I have been so far helped that I have not spoken in vain. The infirmities of the body, I know by sad experience, not only depress the feelings, but blunt and enfeeble the intellect. I should be glad to spend my time more profitably to myself and others, and for this purpose I am daily praying that my health may be restored, and when restored sanctified to the service of God and his redeemed people. My times are in his hands, and to him I would commit my way. If he chastens me, yet his mercies are exceedingly great; and the sure mercies of the covenant are better than all the treasures of earth.—1852."

"I do not find it a privilege to spend an idle Sabbath.

Labour is rest in the service of my ever-gracious Lord, and I would that he may so fill me with his Spirit, that I may work while it is called to-day. My prayer has often been that I might

> 'My body with my charge lay down,
> And cease at once to work and live.'

—1856."

Under date July 21st, 1856, he writes :—

"This day of the month, in the year 1823, I was publicly ordained to the pastorship, and it was a day of hallowed pleasure to many who were present. But few of them are now alive, and this little remnant will soon descend to the grave. Oh may we be watching, working, and waiting for our change with joyful hope!"

A few months later he writes :—"If strength be given me, I have no wish that my labours should be less. There is a real blessedness in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ which I am not willing to lose. And at the present juncture, when so much positive error is propagated, and when what has recently been designated 'Negative Theology' is sapping and undermining the foundations of Zion to a fearful extent among nonconformists, it is an honour and an imperative duty to stand up in defence of the gospel. I have to bless God that the doctrines of his sovereign, discriminating, and efficacious grace, which I have held and preached for nearly forty years, are increasingly precious to me. I have lived upon them, realized their worth in a thousand vicissitudes, and they will sustain my hope when dying. They are not, as some imagine and maintain, mere dogmas; they are the essential elements of experimental religion, the precious and imperishable seed of true holiness. I am compelled to attribute all my usefulness in the

Church, under the life-giving energy of the Holy Ghost, to the earnest and faithful inculcation of these doctrines. They are *the* gospel, and without them there is no gospel."

THREESCORE AND TEN.

A few weeks before completing his seventieth year he writes, 1859:—

"I cannot think so clearly and connectedly as I have been accustomed to do, and my memory is often at fault. This is my trial, but I would not complain: it is quite right that I should suffer it; and my desire is to rest quietly in the will of God, and to be of one mind with him when he chastens as well as when he comforts. There is nothing amiss in his dispensations, and we shall find that all will be well in the issue, 'for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.' I am not without hope that he will relieve me from this infirmity, so that I may serve him a little longer in the gospel of his dear Son. Feeble and depressed as I usually am when I enter upon my Lord's day engagements, I am yet sustained and carried through them—not, indeed, with satisfaction to myself: I have too deep a sense of my manifold imperfections to be satisfied—yet so that the Lord accompanies the word preached with light, power, and savour to the hearts of his people, and blesses them with times of refreshing from his presence."

WORTH OF THE GOSPEL.

"I find at the age of threescore years and ten nothing will meet my necessities or satisfy my desires but the gospel of pure, free, and superabounding grace through the finished work of Christ to me a sinner, and giving me in him, and

by virtue of his transcendent merit, a full right to all spiritual blessings with eternal glory, by covenant, promise, and oath, and so requiring nothing of me but simple and entire trust in the faithfulness and power of God to do as he has said.

> 'The gospel bears my spirit up;
> A faithful and unchanging God
> Lays the foundation of my hope
> In oaths and promises and blood.'"

ON PROVIDENCE.

"The trials with which you were previously exercised were, no doubt, a necessary discipline to prepare you for the mercies you now enjoy. This is the general method of his proceeding; his providence is sovereignly wise; he makes us feel the want of the good he intends to bestow, that when he gives it we may rightly appreciate and enjoy it, and glorify him in the use of it. He is never reluctant to show mercy, but he may withhold it for a time, that he may be the more merciful. Retracing the way in which you have been led, you can now see how admirably every link in the chain of providential arrangement has been adapted to its place, and the review of the past will encourage you to trust in him for the future. Still it will be well for you to bear in mind that your present resting-place in the wilderness is not your home; guided by the pillar of cloud, you have reached the spot you now occupy; but it is not Canaan—the rest that remaineth for the people of God. Look, then, beyond, and while you admire the hand that has conducted you whither you are, rejoice in hope of soon being led onward to the possession of a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. If you

are resting by faith in the person, grace, and finished salvation of Jesus, your title to that blest habitation is settled and unquestionable. And have you not, my dear child, been led to him as your only hope, and found him mighty to save? Taught by his Spirit to know and believe that your salvation centres solely in him, and that eternal love has deposited all its treasures in him for your use, it is your privilege to come to him with unembarrassed freedom, that you may receive all you need from his fulness. Trust in him as your Prophet, Priest, and King, and you will find, in the want of all things, Christ is all you want.—1847."

"It is pleasant, it is gladdening to those whom God loves, to know that his sovereign will has determined what and where they shall be. This should quiet us under every dispensation. His ways may be unsearchable, but they are always right; he may conceal his designs, but he has given us this assurance, 'I know the thoughts which I think toward you: thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' What he is to us in his everlasting covenant secures to us every necessary good. For my own part, I have learned, through many years' experience, so much of the excellency of his dominion and the blessedness of being under his care and control, that in my best moments I rejoice in all that he does. Changing scenes are but the development of his unchanging purpose, and the all-perfect plan of his Providence.

'Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
And vexed with trifling cares,
While his eternal thought moves on
His undisturbed affairs.'

"Be not afraid to trust him. Wait at his throne, not as

a slave, but as a child, and he will give you all you ask in the name of Jesus.

"There is one divine rule, which, if always acted upon, is accompanied with a promise which secures to us the certain possession of every needed good which the providence of God can supply: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.' I have just been impressed with the conviction that I have not sufficiently regarded God as MY FATHER, and I have felt cheered by being able to appeal to his gentleness, prudence, and paternal love. It is as the Father of his people that he will provide for, bless, and chasten them for their profit. And when we know him by the spirit of adoption, and can call him 'Abba, Father!' we delight to wait upon him, obey his commands, and submit to his adorable sovereignty in whatsoever comes to pass. Paternal love guides his hand in every dispensation, fills the throne to which we come, listens to all our requests, supplies every want, and will at last be to us an illimitable ocean of blessedness when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. May you never be permitted to rest in anything short of the enjoyment of it in the full assurance of your adoption.—1849."

"With all the uncertainties of life, and the unknown events of the future, I can only mention what I wish for, rather than what will be. Our times are in his hands who has precisely fixed the occurrences of every day with an intelligence which cannot be mistaken, and a goodness that does all things well. Providence unfolds his purposes and executes them; it is our happiness to know and believe this, and to 'be still, and know that he is God.'—1854."

"The changes that we experience are so many open pages of the book of Providence written for our instruction; and if we can read what is written so as to understand what he means by what he does, we shall see that every event is 'big with mercy,' and deserves our grateful acknowledgments, while it encourages our confidence and hope. 'Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.' Wilderness mercies are sweet, but they are not our portion; they are necessary and welcome, but God hath provided better things for us. The manna in the desert showed his care for his chosen people, but Canaan was their inheritance. While we taste the nether springs, let us daily seek to drink largely and refreshingly of the upper springs of covenanted love. We never expect so much as God is willing to give. Unbelief shuts us up in self; precious faith brings us to his throne, and will not let us be satisfied with anything less than the fulness of God in Christ Jesus. —1855."

"The little trial you have had may have been intended to remind you that there is a *will* above your own that determines every circumstance and event in your temporal concerns. God's will may be at variance with ours; but we may submit to what he does when it crosses our designs and hopes with the fullest assurance that it will be best in the end. Whatever may be the course of his Providence, it is his good pleasure that we should cast all our care upon him, because he careth for us. His absolute dominion, by which he manages and controls all things for his own glory, is a truth which, when inlaid in the heart by faith of the operation of God, will enable us to witness the vicissitudes of

our ever-changing state with sweet submission, and with joy also in the forethought of the future, when the complicated web of Providence will appear to us a beautiful combination of circumstances, so adjusted and working together as to contribute to our highest good, and so as to display the wisdom, goodness, power, and faithfulness of God in all his ways. I can say for myself that some of my happiest moments have been those which have been employed in meditating on the excellency of God's dominion. 'A glorious high throne is the place of our sanctuary.' Well might the Psalmist say, 'The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.' When I am in my right mind—that is, when I live by faith, so that I have to do with God, because, by his Spirit, he has to do with me—I can say of every dispensation, however afflictive, '*It is well.*'—1861."

GRATITUDE AND PRAISE.

"We have nothing in the form of intelligence worth communicating; yet we have so many mercies and so much mercy even in the afflictions and trials we endure, that we have an ample theme for the employment both of pen and tongue, if with feelings of gratitude we will but acknowledge the debt, the uncounted debt, we owe to the God of all grace. Praise becomes us who have received so largely of his benefits; and it is an exercise of heart which I delight in. My cup is indeed full, and I enjoy God in it. He could not have dealt so bountifully with me if he had not redeemed me by the blood of the Lamb; and in the fulness of my redemption by that 'precious blood' I see grace so sovereign, love so boundless and bottomless, that there is nothing so great or good which I may not expect—expecting, ask for, and asking for, obtain.

'Oh the sweet wonders of that cross
Where God my Saviour loved and died;
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From his dear wounds and bleeding side.'

'Wonders' indeed—wonders in the person of the mighty and majestic sufferer; wonders in the transfer of the sins of his people to himself, their willing Surety; wonders in the overwhelming sorrows and pains he endured when the curse, the whole unmitigated curse of the law, fell on him and spent itself in his death. In these wonders of the cross we behold by faith our acquittance from all guilt, and are sweetly assured that God is our reconciled God and Father. Fury is not in him. He is all love to us; and in the full persuasion that he will always be so the mind is kept in perfect peace. If trials and wants press upon us, we have nothing to fear, for 'if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' In the proclamation of this grace-exalting doctrine my soul lives in its happiest element, and while I am doing so the 'Prince of the kings of the earth' condescends to visit us in Zion, the city of our solemnities. If it were right to wish, I could wish that you could step in and sit down with us and say, 'This is my Beloved and this is my Friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.' There is truth indeed in the sentiment of good Mr. Hart—

'None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.'

I commend you to him as to the incomparable lover of his Church, with my heart's desire that you may so know him that in all your affections, thoughts, wishes, motives, joys, hopes, words, and actions, Christ may be all and in all.—1853."

ASSURANCE.

"I am made to feel the necessity and importance of having a lively, settled assurance of my personal interest in the superabounding grace of the triune God. This assurance must be inlaid in the heart's experience in order that we may enjoy perfect peace, and have our fruit unto holiness. Yet how little is this understood; and how few consider it essential to pure and undefiled religion! Is not the want of this feeling, experimental consciousness of personal interest in the free, rich, and abounding grace of God, flowing down to us through the righteousness, blood, and merit of the altogether lovely and precious Immanuel, the principal reason of the levity, frivolity, and worldliness of many who name the name of Christ? What I mean is thus expressed by the apostle, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who *loved me*, and *gave himself for me*.' In proportion as we feel the necessity of living in the exercise of such a realizing faith, we shall be sensible of our inability to maintain it. Impotent and helpless, we shall give ourselves unto prayer, and wait with great searchings of heart growing discoveries of sin, both in heart and life, and earnest confession and wrestlings for the supply of the spirit of Jesus; for as Jesus has meritoriously accomplished our salvation, so he is the Author and Finisher of our faith. My heart's desire is that you may learn to live upon his fulness, and sweetly prove that God, even the Father, by one sovereign act of his everlasting love, hath made you accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Of late I have been learning more deeply and fully the truth of an observation

of Mr. Romaine's, to this effect, 'It needs all the love of the Father and all the grace of the Spirit to enable a sinner to live upon the fulness of Christ.'—1853."

POWER OF UNBELIEF.

"I will not trouble you with a recital of my spiritual conflicts and heart sorrows; it is sufficient to say that I know their cause: they are the offspring of unbelief, and so powerful and deep-rooted is this evil, that I am becoming more and more sensible of my entire dependence on the sovereign grace of God to enable me to live by faith. Others may think they can help themselves, and believe as they please; but I feel that I cannot. 'But he giveth power to the faint; and to them who have no might he increaseth strength.'—1852."

SUBJECTION TO THE WORD OF GOD.

"In all matters you are pretty well aware that I think for myself, and I do so because I feel no satisfaction in allowing others to think for me. I admit of but one general exception to this rule—and this exception I admit most willingly, most joyfully; it is this, that in everything relating to sin and my state as a sinner—to the way by which I shall assuredly be saved, to what I am to do so as to please and glorify God, and to what I may expect from him—my concern is to take his thoughts, not my own, by an implicit trust in his word. My daily complaint is the want of a more childlike simplicity to come to the feet of Jesus that I may learn of him. All knowledge other than that which comes from him and relates to him is nothing worth. I am content that reason should be laid in the dust and trampled on, that faith, precious faith, that inestimable gift of God

may rule in the heart. My best wish for you is that you may be most richly blessed with this peace; you will then count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.—1855."

THE BLESSED DEAD.

Mr. Wright was greatly favoured during his pastorate in witnessing the happy deaths of many. With reference to some whose memories are still fragrant, he writes, January 19th, 1857:—

"Since this day twelvemonths we have lost no less than eleven members of the Church by death, and two others will probably not survive more than a few days. Indeed, this morning I expected to hear that one of them, Mrs. Barber, was gone; but I have been to see her. She cannot, however, continue much longer. It has been pleasant to sit by her bedside, and witness her cheerfulness and assurance of hope. The other, Mrs. Carter, was seized with paralysis last week, and has had but a few short intervals of consciousness since. On the day before her attack I had some sweet conversation with her. She has been one of the most spiritually-minded persons I ever knew. She has passed through much trial and affliction; but her life has been a bright example of the apostolic admonition, 'Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks.' Oh, what grace can do! Of the other eleven we have good hope. With the exception of two, they died in peaceful hope, or full assurance of eternal life; and one in the triumph of faith, singing, about an hour before she died—

'Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more.'"

In common with those whose *end* he thus notices, Mr. Wright's *way* was as theirs had been—a constant reaching orth to Christ by faith. In April, 1857, he writes :—

"I hope that as the weather becomes warmer I shall, by air and exercise, acquire as good a measure of health as, at my time of life, I can reasonably expect. But I want something beyond this; I want so to enjoy God and his salvation as to know that he is the *health* of my countenance. The joy of the Lord is the strength of his people; and could I but dwell on high, and rest by faith in his unchanging love, my soul would rejoice while the outer man is decaying. The day will, I hope, come when, with 'like precious faith' as that of Paul, I shall be able truthfully to say as he said, 'Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'"

INWARD TRIBULATION.

"My cross is not now what it once was—outward trouble. The conflict of the soul with indwelling sin, the temptations of the devil, and an evil heart of unbelief, fill me with sorrow and sadness. While suffering these secret exercises, I am as one tossed with tempest and not comforted. Yet I have no doubt the discipline is needful. The life of faith is incompatible with a life of ease. The old man must be crucified, and crucifixion is a lingering, painful mode of dying. Self must be laid in the dust; but how reluctant we are to be brought low and brought to nothing that Christ may be all and in all! In some favoured moments I see Jesus, the God-man, Immanuel, and sweetly feel he is all I want in the want of all things. It is then I understand in part what the apostle said, 'For me to live is

Christ.' I do all things for him, all things in his name, and nothing without him.

'Thou, O Christ! art all I want,
All in all in thee I find.'

—1858."

PATERNAL SOLICITUDE.

"I was much gratified with your late visit, and felt an unusual pleasure when I saw, as you all sat at table, the hale and hearty kindness which you showed to each other. The affectionate concord of a family is very pleasant to one who has cared for them so many years, and sought their happiness by commending them daily to the Lord at his mercy-seat. One thing only is wanted to consummate my wishes: it is to see them all brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd, walking in the footsteps of the flock. May he, by his almighty grace, gather you all, and at last present you before the throne of his glory with exceeding great joy.—1860."

To many the remembrance of the old chapel is sacred, and they will read with interest the following reference to leaving it.

"*June 25th*, 1860.

"Next Lord's day will be our quarterly prayer-meeting, and as it will be the last day we shall worship in our old chapel, I intend to close the services by a sermon in the evening appropriate to the occasion. Quitting the place will be a touching solemnity to many. The building, poor and mean as it is, has been to them a Bethel, and is hallowed to them by the recollection of the blessedness they have enjoyed in it. One said to me yesterday, with tears,

'The very walls are dear to me.' Another, that she never expects so high a degree of enjoyment again as she has had there: that her joy at times has been so great that she desired at once to leave the body, and to be with him whom her soul loved. Such are the sentiments and feelings of others. I have wondered that my ministration of the word should have been the means of so much blessing. Grace, undeserved grace, has been the cause, and to God be all the glory."

Time passes, and after seven years' hard work to free the new building from debt, we find him writing—

"*April*, 1867.

"I have had the pleasure of giving an account of my stewardship as treasurer for our Martyrs' Memorial, and showing that the final balance of debt was discharged. What the kind providence of God has enabled me to do has given great satisfaction to my brethren and friends, and we set apart Good Friday for thanksgiving services in acknowledgment of his abundant goodness. A meeting was held in the forenoon for prayer and praise; in the afternoon I preached from 1 Chron. xxix. 13; and in the evening we had a tea and public meeting in the Assembly Room, which was well filled. We had not any brethren, the ministers of the neighbouring Churches all being engaged in other places, but spent a considerable part of the time in prayer and praise. Mr. Bland was called upon to address the meeting, which he did very appropriately, by a course of observations on the gratitude we owed to God for what he has done for us, then remarking that gratitude to HIM did not preclude the feeling and expression of gratitude to those

whom he employs in his service. This, I supposed, was to prepare the way for a vote of thanks to me; but, to my surprise, was followed by a present of a handsome easy chair, which would afford me, as it was hoped, rest and comfort in my declining life. Allusion was made to mother, whose valuable services in the Church and kind attention to the poor were appreciated by all, and as a mark of grateful esteem another chair of the same kind, with a slight difference in shape, was placed on the platform for her. I expressed our thanks for these unexpected acts of kindness as well as I could, but suffering as I had done through the day from an oppression of the brain, which deprived me of all command of thought, I could not make our acknowledgment what I wished it should be."

Extract on the design of letter writing :—

"It would sweeten the use of my pen if I could write anything which would bear to you the fragrance of that name which is above every name, and who, amidst all our dangers, has an 'all fulness' to supply and enrich us with light, love, and joy, and with all that is comprehended in the well-known words of Zion's dialect, 'Grace and glory.'

"Letter writing is satisfactory to me only when, in correspondence with beloved kindred in Christ, I can write of him, and of the love, purposes, and ways of God in him, that the savour of his name may be found in what I write. In this means of holy fellowship I feel the need of the fresh breathings of the Comforter, and when I most desire it, turn to the throne and ask it. Oh, that I had the faith and love of Rutherford! then would I make my letters to you resemble his in heavenly richness of matter, if not in the fire and soaring of his sanctified imagination; and each

should be a wine-cup from the banqueting-house, pleasant, exhilarating, and invigorating. But the gifts of grace are distributed by the Head of the Church as he pleases, and are diversified in kind and degree according to the services to which we are appointed. If we appreciate his love and wisdom in the distribution, we shall esteem and venerate those who are endowed with the more excellent gifts; and with grateful contentedness for our lesser gifts we shall wait at his feet as our Master and Lord, and ask him to teach, lead, and strengthen us, that we may use what we have in all well-pleasedness to him, and for the benefit of them that are his. There is a sacredness and worth in the gift of a cup of cold water to a disciple in his name as acceptable to him as the noble richer services and offerings of those who, having received much, have much to do and much to give. —1865."

The present groaning within ourselves and the hope of perfect deliverance in the future, were matters of real experience often prompting Mr. Wright's pen, as the following extract shows :—

"Amidst unnumbered mercies and some gleams of light from above to cheer me now and then, when in heaviness through manifold temptations, it might be imagined that I should have something ready at hand to communicate at all times. But it is not so. I can no more command my thoughts and give utterance "with grace" for the benefit of others, than I can bring down showers upon the parched ground. This conviction might be turned to good account, if I could at once go in my emptiness to him, who is to his Church 'as rivers of water in a dry place.'

"I have lately read the Memoir of John Welsh, a recent

publication; and his letters appeared to be the effusions of a mind filled with God, and feeling that its springs were in him. In reading them I felt my soul in fellowship with him, was refreshed and strengthened, and longed to be a partaker of the same grace. What is life worth, and to what useful purpose can we live, if we have not to do with God and if he has not to do with us in all these things? The everlasting covenant, arising out of this one purpose of the eternal mind, 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people,' is established for this end, that is, habitual communion with God, in, by, and through the Mediator of the covenant. The compact is with him and with us in him, that our communion may be free and unrestrained. Why, then, is this design of covenant love so little realized by us? Why, in other words, do we enjoy so little of the heart elevating and sanctifying power of the presence and love of him who is our God, and whose own we are? Alas! the law of sin in our members is a principle of enmity against God, and so lusts against and is at war with him, that it resists us when we would come to his throne, and in ten thousand ways hinders us from living only for God that we may enjoy and glorify him. May we ever, in the deep feeling of this sad fact, see in the fair visions of grace and truth in the gospel that the enmity and the lustings of the enmity are not imputed to us, and that, corrupt and wretched though we be, we stand in perfect loveliness and purest glory before God, in him who is 'JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

"Coming home from the house of God yesterday afternoon with my spirit sad within me, I opened Roundell Palmer's Book of Praise at a page which contained this refreshing and reviving stanza—

'Hasten, Lord, the promised hour!
Come in glory and in power;
Still thy foes are unsubdued,
Nature sighs to be renewed,
Time has nearly reached its sum,
All things with thy Bride, say, Come;
Jesus, whom all worlds adore,
Come and reign for evermore.'

—1866."

The following may be instructive, useful, and comforting to many, as experimentally telling of the physical source of much of the mental affliction often attributed to other causes.

"I suffer every day several hours of extreme uneasiness from dyspepsia, producing, as its natural consequence, such depression of spirits as deprives me of all power to think or act as I would. Satan takes advantage of my weakness and makes it an occasion of manifold temptations. Besides, the severe winter weather has compelled me to keep within doors, and deprived me of the reviving and salutary influence of air and exercise. But it is of the Lord, and my soul desires to accept it as a chastening which in his righteous judgment he knows to be needful. However, it is with daily strugglings of the heart, and many conflicts, that I am seeking to be passive in his hand as clay in the hand of the potter. Now and then I seem to realize it, and then I am at rest, all is peace; but it soon passes away: it remains but for a little moment, and after the calm I am 'tossed with tempest and not comforted.'

"The conviction grows upon me that many of the trials of God's beloved people, which we call spiritual because they form a large portion of the bitter experience of the heart, such as darkness, bondage, infelt desolation, barrenness, distance from God, and inability to wait in the patience

of hope, and with earnest wrestlings at his throne, are to a great extent attributable to a physical cause. The mind is affected by the ailments and infirmities of the body, and from nothing does it suffer so much as from the nervous excitability to which we are more or less subject, and which often overbalances the reason, perverts the understanding, and deprives us for a time of all power to form a sound judgment of our state before God. We imagine that all things are against us; but if, in the light of faith, we could look above and out of ourselves into the wisely arranged and settled economy of eternal love, we should see with sweet surprise, with full satisfaction, and it may be with ravishing delight, that the very things which cast down and disquiet us are means of special grace which work together for our good. Precious faith is the antidote to care and sorrow; and while it is above reason, as the supernatural gift of God, it is reason of the purest kind, and leads to the happiest practical conclusions.—1871."

In the following is evident the intimate connection between physical and mental affliction, and their gracious over-ruling to the spiritual good of the child of God.

Beccles, 27th April, 1850.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I beg you will accept my sincere thanks for your kind remembrance of me. It has been as you suppose; the state of my health has prevented my seeing you. At the time when I received your note in January, I was seized with a cold of unusual severity, attended with some threatening symptoms; and since I recovered from it, I have suffered such extreme nervous depression that I have scarcely had sufficient firmness of purpose to do anything

which I would have done. This has been a severe trial, and the more so because, though proceeding from a known physical cause, it has militated so directly against the exercises of a life of faith, that my seasons of spiritual enjoyment have been transient. But I would not complain. Viewing this afflictive dispensation in its first cause, I am so assured that it has come at his bidding, and is so entirely under his control and management, that from my heart I can say, "It is well." His throne is my sanctuary, and his sovereign will the supreme law to which I feel it my blessedness to submit. I expect to gain by the things which I suffer: his word authorizes me to hope that "when he has tried me, I shall come forth like gold."

* * * * * *

Yours most truly in Christ Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

And then on the design of afflictions; after speaking of his many bodily infirmities, Mr. Wright adds:—

"But the hand of the Lord hath done this; it is right and good because he hath done it, and I accept it as a wisely selected chastening, and hope it will yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. From the growing conviction of the unabated sinfulness of the flesh, and that apart from the operations of the Holy Spirit 'I am carnal, sold under sin,' I see and feel that I can have no peace, liberty, or hope but by a full, immediate, and abiding trust in the blood, righteousness, and fulness of Christ. In order to this, I want, and am daily asking and seeking for, distinct apprehensions of the glory of his person as the 'only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'—1867."

Referring to a friend's illness, he says :—

"May both of you accept the dispensation as the furnace of our Refiner, who intends it as a means of spiritual purification that you may be 'partakers of his holiness.' Not long since I was enabled to look upon my oppressed mind, manifold temptations, and increasing infirmities in this light, and the consideration yielded its sweetness by reconciling me to suffering and weakness. The trials we endure are not to be judged of by what we feel, but by what they are in the purpose of him who has ordained them, and who so manages them that they always come to their proper issue, and precisely fulfil the intention of his will. What can he do better? What can we desire more?—1872."

Mr. Wright's letters on birthday occasions were usually very solemn and profitable. The following extracts from three of such letters show the constant bent of his mind :—

"I am not expert at birthday congratulations. Instead of these, I give you, as a motto to meditate upon, the word of God to you and every vessel of mercy, as it stands in the ineffaceable record of his grace—'I have created thee, I have formed thee.' Why did he this, and bring you to the birth? The reason has been in part given in your spiritual birth, and will be fully understood in the rich glories of your life in heaven; it was for this : he created and formed you that his purpose according to election might stand. You came forth to the light as the offspring of his everlasting love, as his child by eternal adoption, though none that saw you knew it, but took and nursed and nurtured you as the frail and feeble branch of a human root. The true secret of your birth could not then be discerned, but it has since been evidenced in your own

soul, and it will be amongst the happiest of your birthday recollections if you look to the day, and, with grateful and adoring love to your Creator for his rich and distinguishing grace, assure yourself that he formed you that you might enjoy him in the highest state of glory-blessedness, and dwell with Jesus in his everlasting kingdom. May the motto I have given you be engraven on your heart, and in connection with it may you remember he has further said, 'Fear not: I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine,' &c., &c. (Isaiah xliii. 1—4.)—1867."

"My first birthday wish for you is that you may so see and feel the care and abounding love of God as to worship and adore him, and praise him with a 'well-tuned harp.' The stone of grateful memory must be set up, and 'Ebenezer' be the record of the day. The waymarks of covenant mercy should be kept up and preserved, and when looked upon will encourage us to—

'Praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.'

May your future be a life of faith, of communion, of service, and of hope. 'The time is short,' and before you are aware you may reach the swellings of Jordan: wait in hope, and seek daily to be ready for the final passage. 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.'—1868."

"I have taken my pen a day before time, because, as you know, I avoid posting a letter which will be delivered on the Lord's day.

"Looking back to the past, I think of you in a changed position from that of this day twelvemonth—changed not, it

may be, materially, as to outward circumstances, but as to the inner life of the soul, the matter which most deeply concerns you. Time has been progressive, and this inner life has been progressive also. You are not precisely what you were; it may be difficult to mark the line to which, by the continuous supplies of God's never failing grace, you are come, but the life of faith cannot have been inactive, and you are, I trust, advanced to such an intelligent apprehension of what God is in himself, and what he is to you in the trinity of his persons in the everlasting covenant, that you can look with sweet assurance of hope for all that he has promised, and that you feel you have all you desire in him. In such a state of mind you will have the earnest and foretaste of heaven, and will be borne above all the low principles of self and sense to make his glory your chief end in all things. You will be a follower of Paul in running the race set before you, that is, 'forgetting those things which are behind, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' or in the calm reposing attitude of the spouse will be 'coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon your Beloved.' Indeed, there is no essential difference between the ardent, outstretched energy of Paul pressing to the goal for the prize, and the quiet, passive recumbency of the spouse; both denote the invincible efficacy of grace, and terminate in the same happy consummation.—1872."

Beccles, March 10th, 1870.

MY DEAR MARTHA ANN,

I am so unfit for letter writing, that I avoid it as much as I can; but this day requires that I should attempt a line or two, if nothing more, to you. But what can I say? My kind and affectionate regards, and cordial

interest in your welfare, have been always with you; and now, on the verge of life, amidst the decay and infirmities of old age, I would commend you to God, that he may lift upon you the light of his countenance, and make your birthday bright and blessed with the joy of his salvation; and in the days or years following lead you, in your pre-ordained pilgrim path, to the rest of the heavenly Canaan. As one beloved and chosen of God, that rest is yours as certainly by right as it will be yours when, in full possession, you shall be led unto the perfect enjoyment of its blessedness. For then and there, "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed you, and shall lead you unto living fountains of water." This well-assured hope will lighten every cross and sweeten the cup of affliction.

In order to live to advantage, comfortably and usefully, seek for deep-felt knowledge of the everlasting covenant with its sure mercies, and look upon everything that happens to you as appointed by the perfect wisdom of the eternal Three, for the praise and glory of the grace of the Trinity. Look at the entire affliction of your beloved husband in this light, and may both you and he be so favoured with the presence and shining of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, as to be able to see, with full satisfaction, that this affliction is not only right and good, but the best which you could be called to endure. (2 Cor. iv. 15—18.)

But I must lay aside my feeble pen. Mother, you are assured, joins with me in love to you and your suffering companion.

Yours ever affectionately,

GEO. WRIGHT.

MRS. BARNES, Walsham.

The absolute dependence of the saints on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, from first to last, is clearly shown in the following extract :—

"In everything we have to do in the ways of God we must live in the Spirit and be moved by the Spirit, or we shall do nothing well-pleasing to God or profitable to others. We may be very active, as many are very active, in seeking to do good, but our labour is abortive, because we do not first enter within the veil by the blood of Jesus and wait there to be filled with the Spirit. There is often much imperceptible self-reliance prevailing within us, even when we confess that we are impotent and can do nothing; we seem to look away from ourselves to Christ, as 'Jehovah Tsidkenu,' the Lord our righteousness, but fail to look away from ourselves to the blessed person of the Holy Spirit, as the immediate spring of our thoughts, the sole and absolute former and ruler of our motives, and the independent cause and worker in us of all that is good and acceptable to God. We should be always on our guard lest by the subtle influence of the flesh we attempt anything by a partial self-reliance, for in so far as we do this we place only a partial reliance on the spirit of grace. Some who professedly preach the gospel are accustomed to represent believers as new creatures in Christ Jesus, and then, as if because they are new creatures, they have an inherent power, or spiritual ability to do what is required of them; and proceeding to enforce what is called practical godliness on this principle, they inculcate the law rather than the gospel or better covenant. This is an error prejudicial to the life of faith, and implies an oversight of two great and precious promises standing in immediate connection (Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27). The first is 'A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit

will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.' And then, knowing that this inward spiritual change, this new creation, would not be sufficient to fulfil the purpose of his grace in his elect by enabling them to live holily and unblamably according to his will, he superadds the next promise, 'And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and *do* them.'—1866."

But Mr. Wright was no antinomian, making excuses for sloth, because he believed power was alone in the Holy Spirit. A few months later he writes:—

"What faults do we ever fall into, from constitutional defects or other causes, if under the governing power of grace we set ourselves to do that which is right and good and acceptable to God, against all our tendencies to sloth and the claims of self-indulgence!"

FAITH.

"Precious faith sees his hand in everything, and enables us so to acknowledge him that he will acknowledge us, either by the sensible manifestations of his presence, or by such supplies of his Spirit as will keep us looking to him and living for him. All our springs are in him, for all that he hath is ours. We can have no *partial* interest in him; we have no piecemeal portion in his unsearchable riches; when he gave himself to us, he gave up all his possessions for our use and enjoyment. And remember the whole is a *gift*, it costs us nothing, and the free grace donor will never recall that which he has given, nor dispute our right to call it our own. He only says, 'I give freely—follow me fully.'"

It was in December, 1842, that Mr. Wright preached his first sermon in Walworth, from a passage which might be taken as the motto of his whole ministry,—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He was at that time a welcome visitor at my widowed mother's house, and from the first we both venerated the man and valued his preaching. His calm, chaste simplicity of deportment won reverence, while the clear, firm, rich exposition of Scripture was most satisfying to a seeker after truth. To him with confidence I first unburdened my mind on the desire I felt, and the encouragement I had received, to be employed in the Lord's work. At the time I thought his counsel somewhat chilling, yet I respected and observed it, and have since felt sure that it was sound and profitable. "Wait upon the Lord, and be still, till he shall direct your way," was the spirit of it—"the patience of faith must accompany the importunity of prayer." Wise advice, though not likely to be well comprehended by youthful ardour and inexperience. Here is his first letter to me, and may its counsel be of equal value to other young disciples.

Beccles, 2nd February, 1843.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST JESUS,

I thank you for your friendly remembrance of me, and am glad that Zion's great Head was pleased to make the ministration of his own word by me in any way useful to you during my brief sojourn at Walworth. The supplies of the saints in their pilgrimages come from the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who has seven horns and seven eyes—perfection of power and perfection of intelligence—but it is by the TRUTH that he makes himself known to his redeemed, and executes his purposes of grace and mercy.

The gospel as it is in itself, without the additions or interpretations which man's wisdom would supply, is the living voice of the Son of God, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands. What he says affords the firmest assurance of the reality of that which he says; and as he upholdeth all things by the *word of his power*, so by the same word he quickens those who were dead in trespasses and sins, sustains, invigorates, and enlivens the graces of his saints, and preserves them from the evil of sin, temptation, and the world, till he shall present them faultless before the throne of his glory with exceeding great joy. What is *faith* but the heartfelt realization of THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS? what is the *experience* of believers but the enjoyment of salvation and good hope through grace, arising from THE KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF OF THE TRUTH? What is *true holiness* but LIVING AND WALKING IN THE TRUTH? Truth is effectual for these purposes, by being opened and applied in its various testimonies by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ and of God. These considerations should make the gospel more precious to us than gold, and more to be desired than much fine gold. In keeping of its judgments or doctrines there is great reward. Hence it has always been the aim of the dragon who makes war against the seed of the woman—the Church—to seduce the redeemed into the belief of *another gospel*, or so to persecute them as to hinder them from holding fast the faithful word. Would you, dear brother, escape his devices and withstand his enmity, seek to have your mind richly furnished with the doctrines and mysteries of the everlasting gospel; and be not satisfied without *hearing the living voice* of the only begotten of the Father in them. The grace of his lips is in every word he speaks. "The law

was given by Moses; but *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*"

The present time is an hour of temptation; and many who listen to the words which man's wisdom teacheth are either seduced from the simplicity which is in Christ, or are ever learning, and not able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Fearful uncertainty! My heart's desire is that you may be rooted, grounded, and established in Christ, and enjoy the high and sacred pleasure of living in communion with the persons of the adorable Trinity, in the fullest assurance of your covenant interest in their unchanging love.

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise." The displays of his sovereign grace in your Sabbath-school are very cheering, and should cause abundant thanksgiving unto God. May they be incentives to you and your fellow teachers to increased vigilance, devotedness, and prayer.

Present my kindest remembrances to your esteemed mother, and believe me to be,

Yours truly and affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

I must now give two letters addressed to my dear honoured mother:—

Beccles, 11th October, 1843.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I am greatly obliged by your kind contribution to the Pulham Chapel, and trust that Zion's exalted Head will accept it as a tribute paid into his treasury in acknowledgment of your willing subjection to him in the presence of his people, and of the debt of gratitude you owe him for his redeeming love and blood. It is part of our richest blessed-

ness to know that we are not our own; and the full and lively consciousness of this truth will always prompt us to acts of devotedness to him whose we are. This, indeed, is the main spring or motive to the obedience of faith, and thus it dispossesses the heart of the selfish, mercenary hopes and incentives which actuate the legalist and Pharisee, who expect to be rewarded according to their works. The believer will, it is true, receive a large reward; but it will be of grace, that God may be glorified, and his own joy more pure and abundant. All things are ours, because we are Christ's. This is the tenure upon which we hold our title to the inheritance of the saints in light, and the sure mercies of the everlasting covenant. As we neither can do, nor are required to do, anything to gain an interest in salvation or the things which accompany it, so this should be a first principle with us in the life of faith which we are called to live; we shall then be coming to Christ to receive from his "hands, which are like the beryl," the gifts which are ours already in his fulness; and with warm and grateful emotions of heart we shall return to him that which we receive in acts of homage, joy, devotedness and praise. And this, dear madam, is the fellowship with the Son of God into which we are chosen by sovereign and discriminating favour; and it will be consummated and perpetuated to us in the heights of glory to which we shall be exalted when the redeemed shall take their respective thrones in his kingdom, and with adoring humility, and transports of love and joy, cast their crowns before him. Learn, then, to live as a constant pensioner upon free grace; wait at the mercy-seat as a supplicant, entitled in Jesus to all you need and desire; ask much and you will obtain much, if you expect what you ask for as a free gift: and when you can do this,

and consider yourself to be one with Jesus by an ineffable union, his fruit will be sweet to your taste, his name will be like fragrant ointment, and his person altogether lovely in your esteem.

Believe me to be, my dear Madam,
In the bonds of Christian love,
Yours most truly,
MRS. M. BLAND. GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 16th October, 1844.

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND AND SISTER IN THE LORD,

After a delay much longer than I intended, occasioned in part by frequent bodily indisposition, I at length bring pen to paper, to assure you how much I was gratified by the unexpected receipt of your acceptable letter, and I hope that no reluctance you may feel to letter writing will deprive me of the repetition of a favour which will be always welcome. Communion with those who are partakers of "like precious faith" is to me one of my sweetest earthly privileges; and when it cannot be enjoyed by personal interviews, because of local distance, I feel pleasure in holding it by epistolary intercourse. I have, indeed, cherished the intention of enlarging my correspondence by letter with those whom I know and love in Christ Jesus, for the purpose of filling up time for his glory which, for want of bodily strength, I cannot employ in more active engagements. Hitherto, however, the intention has not passed into act, chiefly because of frequent indisposition. Perhaps he who withholds from me the power to do what I would will turn my weakness to my advantage. I have long desired to be so living in the strength of Jesus as to glory in my infirmities, and it may be he is chastening me for this very

end. Be it so: I shall rejoice. We gain but little but through conflicts, afflictions, and temptations. In the mysterious operations of his grace he carries out his designs by means which we think not of: he slays that we may live; empties that he may fill; abases that he may exalt. The faith which enriches the soul with covenant mercy must be tried in the fire. The plants of grace thrive and grow vigorously in the storm; because then they receive most from their living root. How often is the darkest dispensation the precurser of the brightest manifestations of the glory of God, and the most sensible assurance of his favour! It is well for us so to know his name as to trust in him, and take hold of his covenant, even when he seems to frown, and keep us shut up at a distance from his throne. This is not soon nor easily attained: nature would live by sense, not by faith; we would trust in our comfortable feelings rather than the naked promise of God in his word; but as nature must yield to grace, and sense to believing, the furnace of spiritual trial must be kindled and kept burning in the soul till the dross be taken away, and God in Christ be our only light, strength, and joy. If you should walk in darkness, be not discouraged: it is a token for good, an adoption spot; the Lord is leading, though you cannot see him; and as Jesus, all lovely and full of love, takes pleasure in the works of his hand, he will come into the bed of spices which he has formed and planted in the heart of his regenerate spouse, and make them send forth their fragrance. Wait on him, and for him.

With affectionate regards to Samuel,

Believe me to be yours most truly in Jesus,

MRS. M. BLAND. GEO. WRIGHT.

TO MR. EDWARD BUTT.

Beccles, January 14, 1845.

MY DEAR BROTHER BUTT,

I have been a long time trespassing upon your patience. Our beloved brother S. K. B. very kindly reminded me of it, in a note which I received from him on Saturday; and now, as matter of course, my first business should be explanation or apology; but as this would take up time without altering the case, I prefer at once begging you will excuse my delay, and attribute it to anything but forgetfulness of you, or the want of that fraternal regard which, founded in the grace of our eternal adoption, will be perpetuated through time, survive the blight of death, and be consummated in perfect friendship and fellowship when we shall meet with the ransomed multitude, and enjoy, in all its blessedness, their oneness in the Prince of Glory.

It is my mercy, my very great mercy, to be favoured with an improved state of health, subject, indeed, to many variations, yet enabled to prosecute my public work with some degree of energy and ease. But I cannot speak much of soul prosperity, so far as it consists of spiritual enjoyment. Providential trials have, in some instances, produced disquietude, and occasionally, for a few moments, a disposition to fret against the dispensations of the Most High: like his people of old, I have forgotten my "resting places," till the memory of former mercies, and renewed acts of faith on the well-ordered covenant, have reclaimed me and brought me to a better state of mind. I find it difficult in long-continued trial, when there is no light breaking through the darkness, to be *still*,—perfectly still, and wait patiently for the Lord.

Several months since, when much tempted and exercised, this sweet promise was presented to my mind with power and sweetness—"The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." I have been enabled to believe the *former*, but I have had hard struggling about the *latter*. I *try* to *hold my peace*, and as far as the tongue is concerned I can succeed in some measure; but this falls very short of what the words imply. The lips may be silent, and the soul troubled. Looking, however, at the declaration not so much as a command to be obeyed as an expressed purpose of God, which he will fulfil, I am encouraged to call upon him with David's plea, "Do as thou hast said." In the Church it is still my blessedness to know that God is sending his word by my hands, and those who honour him give glory to him for his abundant grace.

I am glad that you keep your place at East Street, and have no doubt but that in the end it will turn to your advantage. "He that believeth shall not make haste." If the ministry of Brother —— be not wholly such as you desire, yet if the Lord is employing him for the good of others, it is a ground of much thankfulness.

Pray for me, and may all grace be with you.

Yours affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

TO THE SAME.

February 16, 1847.

Interruptions to the intercourse of the redeemed must be of frequent occurrence in this world of turmoil and temptation; yet nothing can disturb their eternal union in Jesus, nor deprive them of the fellowship they have in his grace. What we are in HIM is beyond the touch and influence

of sublunary things; and how blessed is it to be assured by the evidence of faith, as the work of God the Eternal Spirit, that he who hath chosen us and made us "accepted in the Beloved" ever beholds us in him, our spotless representative and Head, as the objects of his unchanging love and complacency!

The fellowship of this mystery is but imperfectly realized by the saints in their present disjointed state; but we are hastening on to the period when our Lord's prayer will be fully answered, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." In the mean time, however, there are a few baptized into one spirit, who, in the secrecy and depth of the heart's motions, feel that they are one in Jesus, and live upon the inexhaustible springs of his fulness. *A few*, I said, are thus blest; and the truth, precious as it is, revives in me the conviction, which of late I have more than ever felt, that the vessels of mercy are but little known, and the spiritual Church is yet in a great measure the hidden Church. Be it so. The sovereignty of God in the election of grace appears with brighter lustre, whilst the heaven-taught believer finds it to be his privilege to retreat from the professing multitude, and under the guidance of him whose "eyes are upon the rivers of waters," to "go his way forth by the footsteps of the flock." Conflicts, temptations, sorrows and trials, are indeed strewn thickly in the sheep-walks of Zion. Yet it is here that the *rose* is seen, and the name of Jesus proves as ointment poured forth. Here also, midst pain and weariness, we rest in him who is as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Thither may our steps be directed, my dear brother, with the little flock in East Lane, and rich may your and their blessedness

be in daily communion with our triune God in covenant, to whom be glory for ever.

PASTORAL COUNSELS.

Beccles, April 12th, 1858.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

I can fully sympathize with you in your spiritual conflicts, having been painfully exercised in the same manner, and perhaps in a degree, and for a length of time, much beyond what you have lately experienced. But we are not to think it strange, as if some strange thing had happened to us. It is part of the "much tribulation" through which the heirs of salvation are ordained to pass. The hand of the Lord is in it, though to our feeling and apprehensions it seems to be against us. Heaviness through manifold temptations is needful for the trial of faith, but the trial of faith will lead to the full assurance of faith, and be the means of fixing our confidence more steadfastly in the person, blood, and righteousness of Jesus, our kinsman-Redeemer, and in the free promises of the everlasting covenant. Examine the choice experience of David, Psalm xl. 1—3, and in the 42nd and 43rd Psalms. The 54th of Isaiah is rich with promises, which God will perform to all his afflicted and tried children, who, in moments of sadness and despondency, think that they are deserted and forsaken.

In your worst state you are freely welcome to go to Jesus as you are, and trust in him for your entire salvation. He will in no wise cast you out. It is our business to go to him; it is his to save. We are not required to do his work, and it would be presumptuous to attempt it. Direct acts of faith honour him, and bring peace to our

souls. And is he not worthy of our confidence at one time as well as another—when our hearts are burdened with sin and sorrow, as when we rejoice in hope? "Cast thy burden on the Lord," is a gracious command. It authorizes us to cast our heaviest as well as our lightest burden on him; and if we had no burden, the command would be useless. Reckon that what Jesus is, he is to you. Is he a shepherd? he will lead and feed you; is he a refuge? turn to him, as a prisoner of hope; is he the antitypical brazen serpent? look to him, and you shall be healed; is he the living manna? he is given to you in the gospel, that you may take, eat, and live for ever. Rest in him; worship at his feet; pour your complaint into his ear; treat him as your friend who loveth at all times; expect much from him, and you will receive much, and sweetly find that he is to your languishing soul as "rivers of water in a thirsty land, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

I am glad that your situation is so comfortable to you, and hope you will have times of refreshing under the ministry of the gospel. How true is it that—

> "His flock, his own peculiar care,
> Though now they seem to roam uneyed,
> Are led or driven only where
> They best and safest may abide!"

This instance of his goodness lays you under additional obligations to live holily and unblamably according to his will in all things. We are not our own, but are called to give up all we are and have to him who redeemed us to God by his blood. When we can do this, we shall find in him all we want, in the want of all things; and his name

will be to us like ointment poured forth. Our changes here, though they may be attended with mercies which should excite our gratitude, are also attended with new trials, temptations, and dangers; but his grace is sufficient for us; and by believing (that is, by the firmly-assured confidence of the heart) in him, we shall find—sweetly and triumphantly find—that he is "as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Think always of Jesus as "the Friend who loveth at all times." Lean on him in all you do—like David, when he said, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Cast all your care upon him, and expect all you want and desire from his fulness. You cannot ask more than he is willing to give. Come to him always as you are. Never stay a moment to improve your state: he alone can do that. I commend you to him. May you be a happy pilgrim on the earth, enrobed in his righteousness, filled with his spirit, and adorned with the beauty of holiness.

In my best wishes and prayers, I remain,

Your affectionate friend and pastor,

GEO. WRIGHT.

HARRIET WIGGETT.

COMMUNION.

Beccles, 27th October, 1847.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your kind note, with its enclosure, by this morning's post, and sincerely thank you for them both. I need not say that I was not prepared to expect a letter from you from Wales. The Head of the Church may have

designed this change in your local position for some special end with regard to his blood-bought people; and if so, he will unfold his design, and show you what he would have you do. It is not a little gratifying that you have met with a few (the Sardian number) kindred spirits with whom you can have fellowship in the grace of the gospel and the things of the kingdom of Christ. If we would enjoy and glorify God, in these sad days of Zion's degeneracy, we must take our place with the few rather than with the many. For myself, I feel more and more withdrawn from the worldly Church, be its name what it may, and more closely allied to the hidden Church of God's elect, who are journeying in the consecrated path of "much tribulation" to their heavenly Father's kingdom. The communion of saints is essentially different from the mere religious associations of professed believers, who are strangers to the power, sweetness, and savour of sovereign, discriminating grace. It is in the grace of our reigning Lord we find our union, and as members of his body we are bound together by one principle of life, which develops itself in sympathies unfelt and unknown by the carnal mind. God will make us know that his people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned amongst the nations; and as you are now uniting with a little band of those who dwell alone, ever esteem it your privilege to seek their good, and aid them by every means in your power. I shall be glad to hear, from time to time, of your progress, and may Jesus, our Lord and Head, smile upon you, and bless you with prosperity of soul, and success in your labours of love.

I have not heard much about the Churches in this county since our annual association, which was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. In Beccles we are not so

lively and spiritually-minded as I could wish. My own soul has been much exercised with conflict and temptation; and in preaching I have felt painfully barren and shut up; yet the word has been attended with power and savour to many of the living in Jerusalem. I have lately baptized nine persons, and expect to baptize another—a brand plucked from the fire, a pardoned Magdalene—on the first Lord's day in November.

My dear wife unites with me in affectionate regards and best wishes to you and Mrs. Bland. Remember me when it is well with you, and believe me to remain,

My dear brother,

Yours affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

MR. S. K. BLAND.

A CRYING EVIL FAITHFULLY DEALT WITH.

Beccles, 1st December, 1856.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Your letter did not reach me till late on Friday evening, and as I cannot conscientiously employ the Post-office on a Lord's day, and consequently never receive any letter, nor write any to be delivered on that day, I would not write in reply till to-day.

With regard to the case you mention, I think the Church can take but one course: the young person cannot, scripturally, be received into membership unless she relinquishes the engagement she has formed with one who, as you have reason to believe, is not a sincere believer and follower of Christ. Engagements of this kind are, in a certain respect, morally binding on the contracting parties; but when formed

by a vessel of mercy in his unregenerate state, the moral obligation ceases upon his being called by grace, because he is then required to be subject in all things to the law of Christ, and that law plainly and peremptorily prohibits the consummation of the contract by marriage. It seems to me that the rule of discipleship laid down by our merciful Lord (Luke xiv. 26—33) applies in full force to a case of this kind. An engagement with a view to marriage is, in many instances, given up by one or the other party from prudential motives, and very justifiably so; but the Christian is called to be influenced by higher and holier considerations, and the submission of his heart to the authority of Jesus, and a sense of his constraining love, should determine his conduct.

It appears to me desirable that every means should be taken, with tenderness and kindness, to convince the young person in question of the sin of maintaining a friendship like that she has formed, and its inconsistency with a Christian profession; and if, after all, she will not relinquish the engagement, the Church will show greater love by refusing to receive than by admitting her into membership, under the circumstances. We have separated members for marrying with unbelievers, and on after reflection, and a painful experience of the consequences of being unequally yoked, they have fully justified our proceeding.

The purity of the Church is of greater consequence than an increase of its numbers.

I am, my dear brother,

Yours affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

MR. WOODGATE.

THE STATE OF OUR CHURCHES.

I am not surprised that you observe a departure from the distinguishing truth and principles of the gospel in the Churches around you. The falling away appears to be very general, and with this falling away from the truth there is an equal declension from the life and power of experimental godliness. But be it so. We have a position to maintain in ransomed Zion, and a special work to do; let it, then, be our concern to live on the fulness of Jesus, and preach his unsearchable riches, that we may be approved by him. A little longer, and then he will come; and blessed will that servant be whom his lord shall find so doing.

The deadness of the Churches is to be deplored, and the causes of it should be inquired into with searchings of heart. May not the evil, to a considerable extent, and in most cases, be attributed to a deficient ministry? I cannot resist the conviction that it is so, though it may be difficult to point out very precisely in what that deficiency consists. My isolated position deprives me of personal fellowship with brethren in the Lord's service, and it is but seldom that I have an opportunity of hearing any of them, so that I am not competent to judge, generally, what may be lacking in these ministrations. But the ministry of the New Testament, to be useful to the saints, must be complete—that is, it must comprise the harmonious embodiment of the whole truth, so as to bring out the entire mind of the triune God in all its bearings upon his beloved people. If this be not done, there will be but little spiritual growth, and the saints will not know the grace in which they stand, so as to enjoy the full blessedness and "glorious liberty" of the sons of God. Our perfect oneness with Christ entitles us to

all spiritual blessings, and when fully realized by faith will be accompanied with habitual spirituality of mind, and such desires to be with him, as will deaden us to everything earthly, and give to our habits and character the lovely cast of pilgrim holiness, which will show to those around us that we are the followers of the Lamb that was slain. In him we are complete; in him we are without sin; in him we are righteous—immaculately and immutably so, without spot and without blemish, and like him, above the law of sin and death, raised into the life and triumph of his resurrection state, authorized to call God our Father as fully as the glorified spirits above. But is this truth, with its cognate verities, inlaid as the precious substratum of the professed gospel ministry in the Churches? and if it be given utterance to, is it the utterance of the heart, filled with unction and savour, and bespeaking, to such as discern spiritual things, that the inner life of the speaker is maintained by an experimental knowledge of the theme on which he dwells? I could wish that all my fellow-servants would consider this; and in order to be prepared to meet the necessities of the times by a searching, awakening, gladdening, and purifying ministration of truth and grace, I would that they may press within the veil, and seek all these for their work in the infelt anointing of the Holy One.

"Had I an angel's holiness,
I'd cast away that beauteous dress,
And wrap me up in Christ."

Beccles, 1858. GEO. WRIGHT.

READY TO DEPART.

Beccles, 12th May, 1868.

MY DEAR MARTHA ANN,

I ought to have written to you long ago, and should have done so but for two reasons: I knew you would like to have a letter from mother, and therefore I kept my pen in abeyance till she should write; the other reason was, that I had a large mass of matter to transcribe, the accumulation of notes, memoranda, and the reminiscences of many years; and I resolved, after repeated delays, to set my hand to the work, with a determination not to desist till I had completed it. It was one of the things which belonged to the "*setting of my house in order*," and having done it, my mind is relieved from a care which had again and again given me uneasiness. The habit of procrastinating that which ought to be done will certainly entail upon us dissatisfaction and self-reproach as its legitimate consequences; while the purpose to do that which we ought to do, and to do it at once, according to our ability, will yield a full reward. The celebrated Dr. Franklin compared his life to a book, and remarked that if he had a new edition of it, it should be revised and corrected. Could I have a new edition of mine, I would have John Wesley's maxim, as an emendation, stereotyped on every page. Being asked how he could do so much as he did, he replied, "*I do one thing at a time, and do it with all my might.*"

Indeed, my life has been a series of faults and shortcomings, and long have I seen and felt that I can stand approved before God and in my own conscience only as I lay hold of, and am covered with, the robe of Christ's righteousness; calling him by his right name, and my own name too as one with him, "Jehovah our Righteousness."

But even here my faults and shortcomings often prove an embarrassment to me, and create another fault and shortcoming by keeping me back from an immediate and full dependence of heart and soul upon this name, because I am so barren and unworthy, and am not in myself what I desire to be. I have thought of late that if my surviving friends should inscribe anything about me on my gravestone, I should like it to be just this, "he desired to be known and remembered amongst men only as 'a sinner saved by grace.' Glory to God in the highest." Well do I know that I am and must be a debtor to mercy alone, and that it is my blessedness to be so indebted; yet such is the insidious working of the leaven of self-righteousness, that I am not contented to be always insolvent and always a sinner, who must always go without money and without price in my hand to the Surety and Mediator of the Covenant, that I may live upon his fulness, and learn by deep experimental acquaintance that whatever I am in myself he is made of God unto me: wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that I may glory in the Lord alone. Think of me when it is well with you, and ask of God so to teach me by his Spirit that I may be well assured that "*though I be nothing*" I am complete in Christ. My soul longs to be in full fellowship with him. May you often sit under the shadow of the apple-tree, and his fruit be sweet to your taste.

With kind regards to Mr. Barnes,

I am, my dear Martha Ann, as ever,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Several letters written to his elder sister and her husband in their old age are full of tenderness, and contain words in season—which indeed he never failed to introduce—concern-

ing the eternal interest of those with whom he corresponded; and these appear to be directed with peculiar wisdom, and it may be—may it be—that they shall prove a blessing to other "aged pilgrims."

On February 11, 1857, he writes:—

MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

Bearing in mind that to-morrow is sister's birthday, I now take my pen to assure you that on that day I do not forget you. At the age of seventy-five, I cannot reasonably adopt the common birthday wish, "that she may have many happy returns of the day;" but I can and do express my desire, accompanied with my prayer to the God of all grace, that, as you are both so far advanced in years, you may enjoy the happy assurance of everlasting glory, and wait for your great change with your loins girded and lights burning. Nothing less than such assurance will support the mind, and gladden us when we pass through the valley of the shadow of death. The nearer I approach the end of my pilgrimage, the more deeply and solemnly do I feel that I can have no satisfaction in looking forward to the eternal state without being clearly and fully assured that I have a title to that kingdom which God prepared for his people before the foundation of the world. If I were asked, upon what do I found such assurance? I should reply, not upon works of righteousness that I have done; not on my experience; not upon anything I have done or felt; but upon the perfect righteousness and atoning blood of Jesus, revealed and made known to me by the Holy Ghost. In those precious moments when I am favoured with a glimpse, by faith, of the matchless loveliness and glory of Immanuel, and the salvation he wrought out by his obedience, death, and resurrection, I feel a blessedness which I cannot describe—a joy

unspeakable and full of glory. Now, my dear brother and sister, do you thus know Jesus? Have you been taken from sin and self and drawn to him? And have you been taught by the Holy Spirit to say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord"? Can you declare from heartfelt experience that you count all your own righteousness as dross and dung, that you may be found in him, covered with the spotless robe of his righteousness? Nothing less than this will avail for our acceptance with God. If you know that it is so, and that you are complete in Christ, all is well. The Lord has wrought a good work in you, and

> "The work which his goodness begun,
> The arm of his strength will complete;
> His promise is yea and amen,
> And never was forfeited yet."

May you be helped to examine yourselves, and see indeed that this is your happy case. Your few remaining days will then be bright and blessed. The unchanging love of the triune God in covenant will keep you to the end, and bear you to the place where Jesus is,

> "Where all his beauties they behold,
> And sing his name to harps of gold."

Grace and peace be with you.

Yours ever affectionately,

GEO. WRIGHT.

This good old couple, however, lived on several years, and we believe each year a similar birthday letter was sent. In 1865 we find the following:—

MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,

I am often thinking about you, and wishing to know how you are. It will give me pleasure to hear you are as well as you can reasonably expect to be, with the infirmities and failings of extreme old age. My heart's desire is that you may be helped by the Spirit of Grace, through your few remaining days, to remember with sincere thankfulness the merciful and long-suffering Providence which has watched over and kept you so long; and above all, now that you are so near the eternal world, it may be given to you of the Lord to know by the teaching and sealing of the Holy Ghost that your names are in the Book of Life—that you are new creatures in Christ Jesus; that you are washed from your sins in the fountain of his atoning blood; that you are covered with the robe of his all-perfect righteousness, and so are quite ready for your great change, and the coming of the Lord as the Bridegroom of the Church. Nothing but a certain salvation will satisfy those who are convinced of the depth of the heart's wickedness and the greatness of their guilt as sinners before the Lord, and nothing less will give peace of conscience and good hope in a dying hour. Think of these things, and according to the apostle's exhortation, 2 Corinthians xiii. 5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Through mercy we are pretty well at this time. I have been laid aside by illness for a few weeks. For the last two or three years my strength has not been equal to my labours. An assistant became necessary, and I have now a fellow-labourer and true yoke-fellow in the person of Mr. Bland, late of Chesham, in Buckinghamshire, a brother in the

Lord whom I have known these twenty years. My principal work is to preach once on a Lord's day and on Thursday evenings. Mr. Bland takes other services and preaches in four villages.

* * * * *

My dear wife sends kindest love to you. May the triune God be your God, and make your latter end peaceful and full of hope.

Your affectionate brother,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Before the next year had rolled round his sister had been left a widow, as we find noted in the following :—

Beccles, 7th February, 1866.

MY DEAR SISTER,

I received Robert's letter yesterday informing me of the death of poor brother Holmes. I have been long looking for this. When I saw him, in the beginning of September, I felt assured he would not live through another winter. Since then he has been often upon my mind, and from week to week—and of late from post to post—I have been expecting to hear that he was gone. I intended to express my best wishes for you in a letter on your birthday, next Monday. And what are those wishes? Not that you may have many following birthdays, for at the age of eighty-four such a wish cannot be reasonably indulged. There is but a step between you and death, and the time of your departure is at hand ; and my wish is, rather, that when your change comes, it may be your birthday into immortal life and joy in the kingdom of God above. In that kingdom the inhabitant shall not say, " I am sick ; " tears are wiped away

from all faces, and they who are redeemed from the earth shall dwell with Jesus, whom they love, where

> "All his beauties they behold,
> And sing his name to harps of gold."

Standing as we now do on the verge of time, with the solemn realities of eternity in view, how necessary is it that we should have that safe and well-assured hope which the saints of God enjoy, who can welcome death, and pass through the valley of the shadow of death with holy triumph, or in perfect peace, to their mansions in the Father's house.

If it be asked, on what foundation does this assurance rest? I answer, not on works of righteousness which we have done, but on the righteousness of Christ, the eternal Son of God, imputed to us, and received by faith, and on the atonement of his precious blood, which takes away all sin and saves us fully from the curse of God's broken law. If it be further asked, how does any one become possessed of this assurance? we learn from the Word of God that it is the gift of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart. "By grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians ii. 8—10; Romans iii. 4. 5). Have you, my dear sister, this scriptural hope? Examine yourself closely, day by day, that you may not be in uncertainty. If, upon examination, you cannot find that in your personal experience from which you will be enabled to say, "I know that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," then give yourself unto prayer and meditation on the Word of God; it may be that he will be gracious, and say, "I am thy salvation."

Oh that he may manifest his love to you, and own you as his child by adoption!

* * * * * *

Yours affectionately,

GEO. WRIGHT.

In the letter of 1867 occurs this instructive passage on the most solemn of subjects :—

"Life is now reduced to a very short period, and at our ages we know that our earthly intercourse will soon cease, and we shall go to the house appointed for all living. What, then, should be our chief concern? What, but to be assured of the favour of God, and of a mansion in the Father's house, when we quit the earthly house of this tabernacle? This assurance God is pleased to give, in a higher or lower degree, to every one who feels his sin and helpless ruin; knows that he is blind, naked, and miserable, and in this state, just as he is, looks unto Jesus, and trusts wholly in his blood to cleanse him from all his sins, and in his righteousness, that he may be justified by it in the sight of God. We are not required to bring anything of our own to him but our sinful selves, and if we do so come he will in no wise cast us out, for he came to seek and save that which is *lost.* I have just met with this remark, 'When Jesus comes—and he very much loves to come to poor, lost, wretched sinners—he never expects to find any good *in* them, for all the good he wants *for* them he brings *with* him.' May the Holy Spirit so draw you to him that you may be able to say, from the heart, Jesus is all I want, I embrace him by faith; 'my Beloved is mine, and I am his.'"

The letter of 1869 the writer evidently expected to be the last. Its tone and words are very touching.

"Another year has passed away, and I am spared to write, and you are spared to receive, another birthday letter. This is a circumstance of no common occurrence, that one member of a family, near the close of his eightieth year, should write to another member of the same family on the day which will complete the eighty-seventh year of her life. Preserved so long by him who brought us into being, what can we render to him for all his goodness? The daily and hourly mercies of fourscore years are too many to be counted up, and too great to be valued according to their worth. But for sparing mercy we had been cut down and cast away with them that perish in their sins. We are not less guilty or more worthy than they. Why, then, are we spared? I feel that I owe my life to the long-suffering and forbearance of God. It is customary for us to express our good wishes to friends when their birthday comes round, and one wish for you, my dear sister, is that you may have such a sweet and grateful remembrance of God's providential care and kindness these eighty-seven years, that you may from the heart hail the day by casting yourself before the throne of grace, saying, 'Praise waiteth for thee, O Lord.'

"But these years of mercy have been years of sin. We have gone astray from the womb, and our iniquities have been more than the hairs of our head. How is their guilt to be taken away, so that we may not be condemned at the judgment-seat of Christ? We cannot put it away. Ten thousand of our own supposed good works, our duties, prayers, and tears, cannot atone for one sin. Our own righteousness cannot shelter us from the curse of God's broken law. Nothing but the blood of Christ, who died,

the just for the unjust, can take away sin; and it is only as we receive it by faith as a full and sufficient atonement for all our sins that we can have peace with God, and a safe hope of everlasting life. My second birthday wish for you is, that God, the Holy Spirit, may give you an experimental knowledge of this. You will then pass through the great change, which is now so near, supported by the power of Jesus, and enter into perfect rest."

The next letter *was* the last, Mrs. Holmes dying in the April following—a shock of corn fully ripe.

"To-morrow you will have reached the end of your eighty-eighth year, an unusual long life; and what are my wishes for you? Chiefly these—that God, by his almighty grace, may enable you to reflect with adoring gratitude and praise on these eighty-eight years as so many years of God's peculiar and distinguishing mercy, for which you owe him a debt of love which you can never fully discharge. Praise for all he has done for you will make this birthday pleasant and blessed at the closing of your earthly pilgrimage. My further wish is that, as *a sinner ready to perish*, in your own judgment and feelings you may enjoy a living faith in the Son of God, so as to be assured that his blood cleanseth you from all sin, and that his perfect righteousness is imputed to you, and is so completely your own that you may adopt the sweet words which were breathed from the heart of my departed wife in her dying illness—

'No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the' eternal throne,
And claim the crown through Christ my own.'"

About a year before her own death this aged widow had been called to part with her only son. Here is Mr. Wright's letter to the dying man :—

Beccles, October 12th, 1868.

My dear Nephew,

I have not heard anything about you since I wrote, except from Mrs. Howell, who told me of your weak and failing health, and of symptoms which seemed to indicate that you were approaching your great change. Death is indeed a *great* change, when the soul will pass either into hell or heaven—a state of everlasting punishment for sin, or of everlasting life and happiness, as the free gift of God's unmerited grace and love through the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would give me much satisfaction and joy in the Lord if I were assured that you were made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. The soul is precious, and of greater worth than I can describe, and if lost, is lost for ever. After death it cannot be called back, for none can redeem it ; "because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with a stroke : then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," Job xxxvi. 18. Who knoweth the power of his anger, when the wicked is driven away in his wickedness? In my letter to you I was concerned to caution you against the false and unscriptural hopes which betray so many, and keep them at ease till they awake in everlasting burnings. If you think you have not sinned so much as others, and that your sins are but little sins, you are deceived : every sin, whether it be small or great in human estimation, is an infinite offence against God, who will not and cannot excuse it, for he will by no means clear the guilty. He that covereth his sin shall not prosper. Again, if you build your hope of salvation upon

anything but the person, righteousness, blood, intercession, and all-sufficient grace of God's eternal Son, you will certainly perish in your sins. These are solemn truths. May you consider them, and may the Holy Spirit make you feel the force of them, till the cry of your heart be, "Lord, save, or I perish!" My heart's desire is that God, who only can prepare you for his everlasting kingdom and bring you into it, would set all your sins in the light of his countenance, so that you may despair of doing anything for your salvation, and then show you that Christ, who died the just for the unjust, died for you, redeemed you from the curse, and put away all your sins by the sacrifice of himself. If drawn to him, so as to confide in him as your refuge and hope, "he will in no wise cast you out."

In the prospect of death, and in the feelings of dying, you will be happy and safe if from the heart you so believe that you make confession unto salvation in words like these—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all."

Your affectionate uncle,
GEO. WRIGHT.

TWO LETTERS TO ANOTHER DYING MAN.

Beccles, 17th October, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,

Since I heard of your declining health, and that the disease which has long been preying on your constitution has assumed a form which renders recovery scarcely

probable, I have intended writing to you, and should have done so had I not been prevented by my many engagements on the one hand, and mental depression, occasioned in part by physical causes, on the other. Regarding you as one standing on the immediate verge of time, from which your undying spirit must pass into the eternal state, I feel an earnest concern for your everlasting salvation. When the great change shall come, have you any well-assured hope that you shall enter into the rest which remains for the people of God? Two things are indispensably requisite to such a hope: the first, a deep and full conviction of your guilt as a transgressor of the law of God, and of your total depravity, impotence, and ruin as a fallen creature; the other a living and appreciating faith in the substitutionary obedience and sin-cleansing atonement of Christ Jesus, the God-man Mediator of the Covenant of grace. The truth of these observations you will readily assent to; but in your case, from the general knowledge you have of the way of salvation, you are in danger of mistaking the light of truth in the understanding for the actual experience of want of grace in the heart. In acknowledging yourself a sinner, you may be deceived into the persuasion that you are convinced of sin, even while you are destitute of a broken heart; and from the views you entertain of Jesus as the only Saviour of the lost, you may suppose that you trust in him alone for salvation. If, indeed, you are created anew in Christ Jesus, the mighty change will prove that you are a vessel of mercy afore-prepared unto glory; and the Holy Ghost, by whose all-efficient energy the change has been effected, will preserve you from mistake, both with regard to your convictions and your faith. This blessed person in the eternal Trinity, whose saving agency is the sole and

essential cause of vital experimental godliness in the heart, acts as the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning in every elect vessel who is ordained to eternal life, and by his soul-searching ministry turns his comeliness into corruption; sets his sins before him in the court of conscience; fills him with a sense of God's deserved wrath; shows him that his own righteousness is but as filthy rags, and that no efforts or works of his own will either save him or contribute in the slightest degree towards his salvation. The sentence of death is within him; and with the apostle he can say, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The soul, when passing through this searching and self-emptying process, feels at times insupportably wretched; is tossed with tempest and not comforted, often assailed with fiery temptation, and with every infidel and blasphemous suggestion; would choose strangling rather than life; and though in some favoured moments, when a ray of hope gleams in the prison-house, he enjoys sweet freedom and boldness in prayer, yet in general he can seek relief from his distress only with bitter sighs and agonizing groans. Escape he cannot either from the bar of justice or from the loathsome impurity of his heart. If ever he enjoys salvation, he is sensible that it must be brought to him. If he would believe in Jesus, he finds it beyond his power. Faith is never attained by human effort. In this state the eternal Spirit begins to open the gospel to his understanding; and the discoveries which it makes of God's sovereign, free, and superabounding grace to sinners are accompanied with a sweetness which makes the truth as it is in Jesus unutterably precious to him. His heart is drawn out to the God of love; and at length, by the clear shining of the blessed

Spirit, he sees that Jesus has done all that God requires and the soul needs, and that this is free, perfectly free for the guilty, and under this view he relies with heartfelt confidence on the person, righteousness, and blood of Christ, and is at once filled with everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. May you, my dear sir, be the subject of this self-evidencing work of the Holy Ghost, and rejoice in assurance of everlasting life. I cannot now enlarge upon this subject. Let me hear from you: write freely, and I will write again.

Believe me to be in my best wishes and prayers,

Yours faithfully,

GEO. WRIGHT.

Beccles, 21st November, 1842.

MY DEAR SIR,

I did not intend to delay writing to you, but my hands have been unexpectedly full, and when I had resolved to give the first hour of one day to a letter to you I suffered so much from a violent headache that I could neither write nor think. How little, indeed, can we control time or circumstances! Our intentions are often thwarted by occurrences which we could not foresee; and since the counsel and hand of God extend to the least as well as the greatest events, the various incidents of our lives are a running comment on the inspired maxim, "There are many devices in a man's heart; but the counsel of the Lord, it shall stand." To believe this truth, and to live practically upon it, is true wisdom; but, like every other divine truth, we have no knowledge of it till the hand of the Lord is upon us to abase, bruise, empty and cast us down in agonizing convictions and feelings at his feet. Of this you have had some experience; and just in proportion as the Lord designs to

bless you, he will consume and destroy in you whatever would keep you from entire acquiescence in his wisdom and will, and the enjoyment of happiness in him alone. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." This you have in part experienced, and found that "idols he will utterly abolish," that you may know that he is God, and besides him "there is none else; there is no Saviour." I was glad to hear by your letter that, under his powerful teaching, you are brought to realize two things: first, that being in yourself altogether sinful and unclean, your peace is founded upon the great truth that your sins were all laid upon Christ, who took them away and redeemed you, at once and for ever, from all guilt and all condemnation; and next, that you are so blind and impotent that you can see nothing but as it is revealed to you by God the Holy Ghost, and that you can do nothing but as he worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Christ our kinsman-Redeemer having engaged by covenant to redeem unto himself a peculiar people, accomplished his engagement, and by giving his life a ransom for them—a price infinitely satisfactory to divine justice—he finished the transgression and made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. As the necessary result of this all-perfect salvation, those for whom he died are judicially freed from the imputation of sin, and being without fault before the throne of God, there is no condemnation for them. But this truth is so contrary to our natural reason, so destructive to the self-idolatry of the heart, which inclines us to set up our own righteousness in place of "the righteousness of God," and so utterly subversive of every scheme of religion formed by the wisdom of man, that it is only by the sovereign, self-dethroning

ministry of the Eternal Spirit that the heart is made to submit to it, and that it becomes the subject of experimental realization by faith. Yet, blessed be God, nothing is left precarious or undetermined in his well-ordered covenant. The knowledge of salvation through faith is as certainly insured to every vessel of mercy as was his redemption by blood. Our Immanuel, the God-man, on whom our help is laid, and who is mighty to save, as he died for sinners, so he *creates* believers. The work of faith—by which we know, *evidentially*, *feelingly*, and *joyously*, what he is to us, what we are in him, what he hath done for us, and what God the Father, out of the fulness of his everlasting love, has given to us in him—is begun, maintained, carried on, and consummated by his all-efficient grace. We contribute nothing to it. It is Antichrist, the man of sin, that suggests we must work with him. Our faith is in his hand; and "there is the hiding of his power." The life that we live is his life; his person is the temple in which we are sanctified and devoted to God; his grace is the root of every grace in us. All the perfection, purity, joy, and glory of heaven flow from his fulness. How precious, deservedly precious, is his name to them that believe. I drop these hints that, as you have seen Jesus, you may be looking only and always to him. Mind nothing else. In every conflict, temptation, and trial—when you see that you are but a mass of sin and impurity; when you can neither pray, nor do anything else that you would—care for none of those things, leave yourself wholly with Jesus. It is his business to save, sanctify, liberate, comfort, lead you to God, seal you by his Spirit, give you the victory over sin, death, and hell; and he will do it. Wait on, and wait for him. If you cannot be active, be passive. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." "Thy shoes shall

be iron and brass; and as thy day, so shall thy strength be." Beware of the temptation of seeking any qualifications in yourself, to entitle or authorize you to come to and trust in Jesus. For my own part, I expect no qualifications in myself but those of a sinner—such as guilt, corruption, blindness, impotence, barrenness, misery, and ruin; and with these the gospel assures me that I shall be welcomed and embraced by the Friend of sinners. I recommend you to him. Living and dying may you be his.

Believe me to be,

Yours truly in Jesus,

MR. EDWARD SMITH. GEO. WRIGHT.

Here are some most faithful, yet truly affectionate, pastoral counsels to steadfastness in all the ordinances—blameless, "as unto the Lord and not unto men":—

Beccles, 9th September, 1835.

MY BELOVED SISTER IN CHRIST JESUS,

Peace and grace be with you, from the fulness of our ever adored and endeared Lord. A considerable time has elapsed since I last wrote to you, yet during this period you have not been forgotten by me. I am glad of an opportunity of again entering into a little epistolary converse with one who has long had no common share of my warmest affection and esteem, in the precious membership and fellowship of Christ's mystical body. In him our union is ever preserved, unaltered, and entire, and may be secretly realized by faith, though we are separated by local distance. How blessed and pure is the friendship which has Jesus for its centre, and is kept alive by the continued supply of his Spirit! But in what state of mind will this meet my dear friend? Forgive me if I fear that you should be seduced

from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. The principal subject of your last letter gave me considerable uneasiness, because I was convinced you had turned aside from the *right* ways of the Lord, and I was under some apprehension that you would be left to wander through a wilderness of desertion and spiritual barrenness, as a chastisement for your practical deviation from the truth as it is *in* Jesus. I had been accustomed to regard you as one of the sealed number, who stand WITH *the Lamb* upon Mount Zion, having the Father's name upon their foreheads. And I doubt not that, in the simplicity and integrity of your first love, you long and delightfully felt it to be your privilege to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. But when I was informed that you had departed from his ordinances, believing as I did that that departure was occasioned principally by the kindness of your *natural* feelings, rather than by a supreme regard to the public honour and legislative authority of our reigning Lord, I could not but consider the circumstance as a stain upon the garments of your profession. It seemed to me that you had fallen from your high and holy standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, and the glorious beauty of your virgin character was departed from you; and I lamented your fall—I was grieved for your defection. The friends with whom you associated might applaud the step, and even deem you more Christian for taking it; but what is the applause of our fellow worms when the conduct they approve is at variance with the revelation of the divine will, which we are required implicitly and in all things to obey? It would give me no ordinary gratification and pleasure to hear that, under the heartfelt teaching of the Lord the Spirit, you have been brought to a clear conviction of the error and sin of polluting the table of the Lord by sitting

down at it with those who have not been baptized in his name; and I feel assured that such must be your conviction if you follow the light of the word of God as simply, steadfastly, and believingly as you did when you at first inquired into the subject of baptism. It is worthy of remark that when your case was brought before the Church, our dear friend Mrs. Carter sided with you, and thought that if she were placed in similar circumstances she would have done the same. Her mind had indeed often been exercised on the subject, and when visiting at Newmarket she had almost yielded to the desire of joining with her unbaptized friends in the ordinance of the supper. But upon subsequent reflection, inquiry, and prayer for divine direction, she was convinced that she had been in error, and came to me with much evident satisfaction, and expressed her thankfulness to the Lord that the subject had been so clearly opened to her that her mind was quite at rest upon it, and she saw that it would be wrong for her to have communion at the Lord's-table with the unbaptized, however she might love and esteem them on other accounts. And now, will you believe it, that I have almost filled this sheet with a subject which I had no thought or intention of writing about when I first took up my pen? My design was rather to have renewed our intercourse upon the great subject of our former correspondence: Jesus and his salvation, and the reign of grace through him. If this should find you leaning upon him, and realizing by faith your completeness in him, it will find you also a happy and triumphant believer. The spiritual apprehension of him under the revealing unction of the Comforter is the inlet of experimental salvation, holiness, and happiness. This, however, appears to be little understood, even by the Lord's

regenerated sons and daughters, and it is a truth we learn but slowly. We are disposed to seek the grounds of our confidence, and the springs of our sanctification and happiness within ourselves, rather than in Christ, though it is so expressly stated that this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent; and that HE is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. And though an apostle has said, "For me to live is Christ; and the life that I live is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," precious faith finds all the soul needs in the fulness of the Mediator, and from heartfelt realization of what he is, we learn to triumph always in him. I have lately met with the following sweet and savoury remarks of Bishop Reynolds, and much admire them:—"We stand not like Adam, upon our own footing, but are branches of such a vine as never withers, members of such a head as never dies, sharers in such a spirit as cleanseth, healeth, and purifies the heart, partakers of such promises as are sealed by the oath of God, since we live *not by our own life*, but by the life of Christ; are not led or sealed by our own spirit, but by the Spirit of Christ; stand not reconciled to God by our own endeavours, but by the propitiation wrought by Christ, who loved us when enemies, and in our blood; who is both able and willing to save us to the uttermost, and preserve his own mercies in us; to whose office it belongs to take order, that none that are given him be lost. Undoubtedly that life of Christ in us, which is thus underpropped, though it be not privileged from temptation, no, nor from backsliding, yet it is as abiding life. For his merits are as fully imputed to us for justification as if his sufferings had been by us endured, or the debt by us satis-

fied; he alone, without any demerit of his, suffered our punishment." These are truths which the Holy Spirit engrafts into the personal experience of the ransomed, and constitute the light, savour, and substance of vital Christianity. I am thankful for a growing knowledge of them, and wish the same privilege to my ever esteemed friend and sister in Jesus.

Yours truly and affectionately in his precious name,

GEO. WRIGHT.

P.S.—Remember me kindly to your husband. I have said nothing to you about the new and tender relation in which you stand to that beloved immortal which has received its being from you. *A mother's responsibilities are the most serious and momentous.* I can only say now, consider the language of Pharaoh's daughter as the command of God to you: "Take this child away, and *nurse it for me*, and I will give thee thy wages," Exodus ii. 9.

ANOTHER PASTORAL EPISTLE.

Beccles, 16th March, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND IN JESUS,

I was glad to receive a letter from you and to hear of your spiritual state after being removed to a strange place far from Zion's gates, where for many years you had waited and seen the goings of God in his sanctuary. You now know by mournful experience how great is the loss in being deprived of the gospel ministry and its attendant blessings: yet you have also proved the truth and faithfulness of God in his word. "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine," Psalm xxxiii. 18, 19. "I give waters in

the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen," Isaiah xliii. 20. Amidst a famine of outward means, the Lord has fed you with hidden manna; and in the dry and fruitless wilderness of Cheshunt, the living waters of his grace have sprung up to refresh and cheer you. By this you know your election of God, and the unchangeableness of his love. It is worth being led into a desert to learn truths like these. We live by faith, and our faith is strengthened and established by those circumstances and events which most fully show what God is to us, and what we are to God. Time unfolds his secret purposes and fulfils them. We see his mind in everything that comes to pass. And how blessed is it to learn that whatever may be our lot in the earth, such is our union to Christ, the Head of the Church, that our spiritual life is preserved by a continual outflow of grace from his fulness, and is sometimes the most vigorous when, as to sanctuary privileges, we suffer the greatest disadvantages. If, as you now expect, the Lord should bring you back again, we shall be glad to see you; and your sojourn in the wilderness may at some future time supply you with some grateful and pleasing recollections.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you. Believe me to remain,

Your affectionate Pastor and Friend,

GEO. WRIGHT.

DIVINE RELATIONSHIP MOVING TO HAPPY SERVICE.

Beccles, 28th July, 1834.

MY DEAR FRIEND IN JESUS,

I am not willing to let the present opportunity pass without sending a line to you; yet with an aching

head and a mind barren as the wilderness I feel that I have nothing to write about, and that writing will be a labour to me without being a benefit to you. How much am I the mere creature of circumstances? so much so that I scarcely do anything that I ought to do. Sometimes my soul earnestly desires to live only for the glory of God. It seems to me desirable to live wholly in the most entire self-denial, or rather self-annihilation, doing his will. Gladly would I spend my existence, in labours of love and zeal, that his name may be exalted in the earth; but when I make the attempt my weakness distracts and confounds me, and leaves me to mourn in secret, with bitterness and dejection, the extreme imperfection of what I do. For several weeks past I have suffered much bodily debility, besides many temptations from without. The trial has been great, yet of late I have in some measure rejoiced in the righteousness of God in appointing it. Indeed, all his perfections appear to me as so many fountains of joy to us in Christ Jesus, while his infinity, immutability, and eternity impress me with the assurance that the joy is boundless, unchangeable, and everlasting. What he is to himself, he is to his elect. His glory is the inexhaustible source of our glory, and in his light still we see light. Our *life* is hid with Christ IN God. Could we gaze in uninterrupted vision upon his unveiled excellencies, our souls would be ravished with sweet and overpowering love and delight. Creatures would appear as nothing to us, or be prized and loved only because they are the production of his hand, and display what he is. And oh, how happy should we feel in knowing that we are the subjects of his government, and that he has the entire and absolute disposal of us! Our wishes and desires would be limited by his will, and find

their centre and consummation in himself alone. In a word, God would be all and in all to us. Well, such will be our blessedness ere long. We foretaste by faith, and time is hasting us onward to the full fruition—we are passing to it with an arrow's flight. It is near, inexpressibly near; the distance is only the span of life, and our passage to it is sanctified and made sure by the triumphant resurrection of our ascended Lord. Nay, already we are sinless, deathless, and glorious in him. The world may ask us the reason of such a hope, and we answer them plainly and confidently: our reason is God's reason, and the reason why he will make us so blessed is because he *wills* it, that he may gain an everlasting name—his declarative glory being the ultimate end of his purposes of grace. Seek, my beloved child in the Lord, to have your mind thoroughly imbued with this truth under the Spirit's unction, and may you be much blessed with the prelibations of certain glorification in the mount of communion.

Now I have almost filled my paper, I am thinking that I have many things to say to you, but my headache increases, and I must leave what I have to say to some future opportunity. Give my Christian love to your good husband, and thank him for his friendly communication. I still remember that I am in his debt. May your union be a lasting blessing to you both. Seek each other's welfare in all things, remembering that you are so one that you cannot be *individually* happy without being *mutually* happy.

Yours affectionately in Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

MRS. ALDRED.

ALL FOR THE BEST.

Beccles, 30th June, 1859.

MY DEAR MADAM,

In your letter you have adverted to the blessedness of tracing the movements of God in everything that happens, even to the minutest events. It is, indeed, most true that the slightest incidents are ordered by him: they are the offspring of his purpose, and are brought forth by his hand. Precious faith can easily discern the outworking of his love; his will and wisdom in all things will ever lead us from secondary causes to the first cause, and will bring the heart to that full acquiescence in what he does, or permits to be done, which will enable us to say of every event and dispensation, "It is well." There may be much interwoven in the web of Providence which to our short-sighted judgment is perplexing; but our perplexity ceases, and the mind is quieted, on the instant that we look beyond the appearance of things to God, who hath loved, adopted, redeemed and called us, and whose ways are always in exact accordance with his everlasting covenant. Imperfect as our present apprehensions are, yet when we remember all the way in which he has led us, we see that all things have worked together for our good, and that we could not have been exempted from our severest trials without being deprived of some of the sweetest mercies we have since enjoyed. What do we value, among our choicest benefits, more than sanctified tribulation? In brighter worlds above, where our intelligence will be perfected, our entire earthly being will be seen inlaid in richest grace; and we shall know, to our abounding joy, that God never did anything with us but as he beheld us in union with Jesus, the head and heir

of all things. May it be given to you to have daily fellowship with him, and to enjoy all things in that fellowship.

Yours most sincerely in Christ Jesus,

GEO. WRIGHT.

TRIBULATION WORKING EXPERIENCE.

Beccles, February 5th, 1845.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

If long-continued barrenness of soul will excuse your dilatory correspondent, I may be fully excused for writing to you so seldom. But I will not allege that in my excuse which daily hinders me from doing the good that I would. I know it is both my duty and privilege to hold intercourse with the dear saints of the Most High; yet, alas! how often is it my painful experience to suffer a spiritual dearth within which indisposes me for the duty and deprives me of the privilege. It might, perhaps, be supposed that after many years' acquaintance with God's word and the sweet mysteries of his grace, there would be no ground for this complaint. Instead of dearth, it might be presumed that the soul would be like a watered garden—fresh, flourishing, full of fruit, and sending forth the fragrance of the bed of spices; and the tongue and pen always prepared to communicate to the living in Jerusalem the secrets of experimental wisdom, for their edification and more abundant light in the Lord. Reasonable as this presumption appears to be, I am constrained to acknowledge that with regard to myself it is groundless. It may be otherwise with the more highly-favoured heirs of salvation, who, under the sovereign dispensation of covenant mercy, are blessed with a larger supply of the Spirit of grace. He giveth to all that are his severally as he will: to some

a high degree of sensible enjoyment; while to others, equally beloved, the dispensations of his throne are like the blast of the desert that withers every green herb, dries up the moisture from the surface, and leaves nothing but an aspect of dreary barrenness in its course. From this difference of dispensation, the question may be asked, Which of the two is to be preferred? If we advert to the determining *cause* in the eternal Mind, we may with propriety say, neither; each is the result of consummate design, and perfectly right and good in its place. Both emanate from his everlasting love, and will terminate in his glory; but if we descend to the *effect*, developed in the subsequent experience of the soul, I am not certain that the latter is not to be preferred to the former. Precious faith is not the early and rapid production of the hot-house, but a hardy plant of the wilderness, growing best amidst the storm-trials which blight and shrivel our dearest joys; and if the growth of truth be the best sign of spiritual prosperity, it is easy to see which dispensation of mercy, the pleasant or the severe, is, upon the whole, to be preferred as the most beneficial. If, therefore, I now complain of my dearth and unfruitfulness, I am not without hope that the cause of my complaint will at some future period be the occasion of my richer joy in the Lord. "He opens springs in the desert, gives us our vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope." The recollections of many bygone years, and the chequered scenes of my pilgrimage, encourage me to believe that he waiteth to be gracious, and that after this dearth I shall enjoy the latter rain. Till then I would glorify him by patient stillness at his throne. "Let him do what seemeth him good."

In the service of your Lord and Master I can only

now say, Inquire what is his will; answer when he speaks; follow where he leads; commit your way to him; trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass.

I thank you for the little tract you sent me. It is very precious; I should feel gratified if you would favour me with any number you can conveniently spare for distribution. It appears to me well adapted for the purpose, and would, I doubt not, be useful, under the hand of the Eternal Spirit.

Remember me affectionately and in my best wishes to the friends at East-street as if I mentioned them by name, and believe me to be,

My dear Brother,

Yours in Jesus,

GEORGE WRIGHT.

TO MR. S. K. BLAND.

"Amidst many trials, I am the subject of many mercies. It has been my privilege of late to see more of the glory of super-creative grace in our eternal election in Jesus, and to understand more clearly the mystery of the Father's will; the subject has yielded me a rich banquet of substantial satisfaction and delight. What mere chaff is the 'yea and nay' gospel, which is now constantly preached, to the everlasting gospel which unfolds the wonders of eternal love.—*September*, 1844."

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION.

Beccles, December 3rd, 1852.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I beg you will accept my sincere thanks for your kind remembrance of me, and renewed invitation to spend a little time under your hospitable roof; but I regret

to say that the state of my health will oblige me to keep at home till the Lord, my physician, shall see fit to restore my strength, or in some way relieve me from engagements which I am scarcely able to sustain. I had hoped that I was getting into a more healthy condition; but in the latter part of October I caught, by means which I cannot account for, a very severe cold, and have since suffered a relapse into my dyspeptic ailments, and to such a degree that at times I am afraid to take even the plainest food. Yet, amidst all, I have been graciously helped to continue in my public labours; and while you, my dear madam, can bear testimony to the unfailing kindness of our Heavenly Father in "keeping your soul alive in famine," I am able to bear my testimony to it also, in making his strength perfect in my weakness. We find, indeed, that what he does exactly accords with what he has said, and all his dealings with us supply us with reasons to trust in the Lord and not be afraid. The union we have with Jesus—our enthroned Redeemer and Head, who is the appointed heir of all things, and with whom we are joint heirs—gives us a sacred and sanctified interest in all the events and dispensations of Providence; and the privations and trials which are interspersed in our earthly pilgrimage are so only as they fall within the arrangements of covenanted mercy. It is in this light that "precious faith" delights to meet all occurrences, and to view all the various circumstances which chequer the scenes of the desert through which we are travelling, seeing and realizing God and his love in all. Complain we cannot: it is ever well with us; nor can we nor do we desire to be exempted from a single cross, however burdensome it may be to flesh and blood, because we are assured that that cross is as mercifully intended and

as wisely selected as any of the means of our richest joys. In a little time we shall be in that world of perfect light, when we shall see the word of God in all that has happened to us below, and give him glory for all. The shadows of the evening are gathering—our day of conflict, sorrow, and sin is almost ended, the hand upon the dial shows that the hour of our departure is at hand; these bodies, in inseparable membership with Zion's head, will sleep in Jesus till his coming; and in the mean time our unclothed spirits will be where he is, and

> "Where all his beauties we behold,
> And sing his name to harps of gold."

Let us, then, watch with our loins girded and our lights burning. My heart's desire is that he may often *bring* you into the banqueting-house—I mark the word *bring*, because it is not by our own strength, but by his, we go in thither—and may you day by day enjoy the sure mercies of the everlasting covenant.

I value friendship only as it grows out of a living union with the one head of the mystic body; a union that gives it sanctity, sweetness, and immortal permanence, produces in the various members a harmony of judgment, motive, hope, and happiness, and awakens sympathies unknown to other minds. Here we find our equal acceptance with our Father who is in heaven, according to the riches of his grace; here we enjoy by faith the completeness of salvation, and are identified in right with the appointed heir of all things, as we shall hereafter partake in full fruition, and according to our several capacities, in his joy, and the dignity and glories of his everlasting kingdom. Into the depths and heights of this mystery may it be given you to sink and

soar, till your joy in the sovereign and unforfeitable interest which you have in Jesus be full. Let us come, too, and abide at the mercy-seat, till he who is the glorifier of Christ shall so shine upon our hearts that we may see what he is to us and what we are in him, and rise from all the conflicts and depression incident to our fallen state, to triumph always in Christ.

Present my Christian regards to Mr. Kett, and to Mrs. Wodehouse, whom I esteem as one travelling in the path of sanctified tribulation to the kingdom of our God.

I am, my dear Madam,

Yours sincerely in Jesus,

MRS. KETT. GEO. WRIGHT.

"HOW MUCH OWEST THOU UNTO MY LORD?"

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I esteem it a kindness and a favour that you have again made me your almoner. It enables me to do a service of love which I delight in, and from which I have been somewhat restricted by a want of sufficient means to gratify all my wishes. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I will make the best use I can of that with which you have entrusted me, looking unto the Lord to direct me. I feel that you have cast a care upon me—a welcome care indeed—but in my turn I must cast it upon him who careth for us.

I am greatly obliged for your many acts of kindness, and for your requesting me to put this into the Lord's treasury. I accept it in his name, and would place it to his account who never suffers anything to be done for him in faith and love without its reward. Indeed he makes it our

blessedness to live for him alone; and when we taste his love and see our completeness in him, we are prepared and sweetly constrained to act upon the true principle of grateful devotedness, "*all for all.*" And is not this, my dear friend, the very point to which every chosen vessel will sooner or later be brought? It must be so. Bought by him, with the costly price of his own blood, we are his by a claim he will never relinquish. He will so draw us by his Spirit, and separate us in our affections from every earthly object and interest, that we shall be for him and not for another. What is it that we most desire but that it should be so? that in our deep-felt and joyous experience we may be able habitually to say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." My heart's desire and prayer is, that you may be taken into full fellowship with Immanuel (that name of endearing grace), in the sweet consciousness that you are so one with him that the Father looks upon you in that ineffable union with the same complacency as he looks upon his only-begotten Son.

May the everlasting arms of God's unchanging love and all-sufficient power be underneath you. Be assured of this, that whatever affliction may be appointed you, he rests in his love, and will be ever mindful of his covenant. Precious faith will say, "It is enough."

In the brotherhood founded on our eternal adoption into the family of heaven, believe me to be,

Ever yours sincerely,

Beccles. GEO. WRIGHT.

THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

We close this series of letters with one which, although, we believe, intended for the press, has never yet been published. Mr. Wright herein very clearly expounds his convictions concerning Law and Gospel—and it is but just to him now to make it public. From those even who may differ from its conclusions, its seriousness, close reasoning, and honesty will command respect.

Beccles, 16th February, 1829.

MY DEAR SIR,

I did not receive your letter till ten days after date, and am quite unable to account for its detention. My engagements prevented an immediate reply. I thank you for the very friendly manner in which you have written, and will endeavour to imitate the example. I like the brotherly kindness that withstands me to the face when I am to be blamed, and would be always ready to give an answer to them that ask me a reason of the hope that is in me, with meekness and fear. May the hand of the Lord be upon me and direct my pen.

Several years since I was impressed with the worth and importance of truth, and began anxiously to inquire after it, with a determination to embrace it in whatever form it might appear, and by whatever name it might be distinguished. I resolved not to confer with flesh and blood about consequences, whether by embracing it I should be beloved or hated, respected or despised, promote my personal interest or sink it altogether. Connected with these feelings and sentiments, the absolute supremacy of divine revelation considerably affected me, as I saw that its dic-

tates were sovereign, and demanded the most unqualified submission of reason.

I had been nurtured in the principles of the Arminian heresy, and had drunk deeply of the poison of that pernicious system. It had my reason and my heart. I thought it a right way, and opposed what opposed it, till the word of God shook my confidence, and made me question the truth of that which I had believed. After considerable conflicts of mind, and a long trial of agonizing suspense, I at length renounced Arminianism as a lie against the light of the plainest testimonies of God.

Happy would it have been for me if from that time I had resolved to have but one book—the Bible and that only. But a fondness for reading induced me to consult systems of doctrines, and the writings of men reputed to be sound in knowledge and in judgment, until I found myself entangled in the mazes and snares of human traditions which they had interwoven with the declaration of the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

Among other things, I readily received the common distinction made respecting the law as a covenant and as a rule of life, not being aware that it is a mere plausible sound of words without any foundation in fact. But I now feel warranted to renounce that distinction as frivolous and absurd; and I do reject the popular phrase, "The moral law is the rule of life to believers"—because it is not "*sound speech* that cannot be denied."

In my inquiries into this subject, I have been struck with the inaptness of the term "moral," as being exceedingly vague and indeterminate. I have considered it in its current use in common parlance; I have looked at it in the writings of men of profound and accurate thought; I have deliberated

on it as an epithet combined with law, and it seems to be a mere chameleon that changes its hue with every aspect. It means anything, according to the sentiments of him who uses it, and is a convenient term for those who darken counsel by words without knowledge. It has not a place in the sacred language of the Holy Spirit from Genesis to Revelation, but it is much in the lips of men who insist that it is the duty of all men to believe to the saving of the soul. The duty, say they, is obligatory, although we have not ability to perform it; but then they gloss the matter by adding, Our inability is not *natural*, but MORAL; "and so they wrap it up," as if the absence of depravity from the heart would be a sufficient qualification for a *supernatural act*.— That the flock of God's heritage do not understand them is certain, and it is a doubt with me whether they themselves have anything like a distinct and definite idea of this word of mist and darkness, borrowed from "the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

I would not, however, object to the use of any term when the thing which it is intended to signify is manifestly agreeable to the oracles of God. No one has a greater aversion to quibbling criticism than I have. Sterling truth is often maintained under the disadvantage of verbal impropriety; and the candour and kindness of the charity which hopeth all things will inquire what is meant, rather than be nicely scrupulous about what is said. Not indeed that I deem accuracy of expression of little importance; but I would studiously guard against a strife of words, when professing to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. If I am in armour for a conflict, let it be for substance, not for sound.

These remarks, however, are not intended to imply a

concession on the subject in question. My objection is not merely against the phrase, "the moral law is the believer's rule of life," but to the thing itself. The moral law is either the law of faith, or the law of works. We are agreed that it is not the former; and the alternative authorizes and substantiates my objection. You differ from me, and think the moral law is ordained "to direct and govern the moral character of believers." But will you, or can you, abide by your own conclusion? If the law is to govern the character, it must have dominion over us, as a right to govern is founded on established dominion, and a character formed under the legitimate government of the law presupposes that the law is enthroned in the conscience. Now, if this is not to be "under the law," I cannot tell what it is. And what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law; and its unalterable language is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." A sentiment so grossly repugnant to the gospel of Christ I do not for a moment hesitate to renounce.

In doing so, and in avowing that I do, you assert that I make void the law, and have advanced several unfounded assumptions to that effect. Permit me to say freely, that you have made use of the apostle's language in a sense other than that in which he used it. No one who thoughtfully reads what he wrote when he said, "Do we then make void the law through faith? yea, we establish the law," will find the shadow of a reason to suppose that by this assertion he means, We establish the law as a rule of life to believers. His whole argument is against the supposition, and is intended to prove that we do not make the law nugatory by the law of faith, but confirm it in all its high

commands, its solemn sanctions, its tremendous penalty, and holy glory, and the final purpose of the divine lawgiver, by preaching and maintaining that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. How the law could be established by better means I cannot conceive. After the example of the apostle, I endeavour according to the ability which God giveth to use the law lawfully, by keeping it in the place assigned to it by eternal wisdom in the grand economy of sacred truth. "The law is our schoolmaster unto Christ; but when faith is come we are no longer under a schoolmaster." The doctrine and discipline of the law are terminated in believing, and when the heart rests in the Lamb that was slain—in JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS—we through the law become dead unto the law, that *we may live unto God.* So I believe, and so I preach.

If, however, after proclaiming Christ as the end or consummation of the law, and the consequent deliverance of believers from the law, I should study to promote their morals by insisting, "The law must still govern you, and be your rule of life," I should gainsay my own doctrine, pull down what I had builded, and expose myself to the just reproach of every wise man in the household of faith as an unfaithful steward, handling the word of God deceitfully, by leading souls from Sinai to Zion for salvation, and from Zion to Sinai for good morals. Yes, thou adorable law-fulfilling Immanuel, I will do so when I suspect the cleansing virtues of thy blood, or the holy influence of thy precious cross—*but not till then.*

> "Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Love,
> Thou maker of new morals to mankind,
> The grand morality is love of thee."

To what end, indeed, should I insist that the law is the believer's rule of conduct? Who would mind me? Not even my friend to whom I write. Every believer that holds the sentiment practically contradicts what he asserts and contends for in words. In no instance does he walk according to the law, either in act or principle. Not in *act*, for when we would do good, evil is present with us, and our righteousness is as filthy rags. The commandment is spiritual and exceeding broad; and how can we be said to obey it if we do not fulfil it? Obedience must be as extensive as the precept, or it is not obedience. Show me your walking by the law, and I will show you your transgression of the law. The debt of a hundred pounds is not to be discharged by the payment of a shilling; much less if that shilling be counterfeit. The first requisition of the law is *holiness of nature;* in the absence of it every action is sinful. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor will security be admitted as a counterbalance for the defect of rightness. An artist may polish a pebble and call it a diamond; but the difference between them is wide enough, although his word may impose on the ignorant and gain the assent of the credulous. And to say that the believer obeys the law because he professes to walk by it as his rule is an untruth, implying the pernicious insinuation that the law is not so inflexibly pure but it will admit of the obedience of a depraved in the place of an unfallen nature. If you make the law your rule, you must come to it with clean hands and unblemished purity of heart, or you will fall short at the beginning, and labour in vain. How much is this lost sight of by those who make their boast of the law! But perhaps it will be said, Our depravity does not exempt us from obligation, though it incapacitates us for obedience. *Granted.*

What is the consequence? The law must have its claims; and how can it have them but from the unfallen nature of our Surety, on whom, by an interchange of persons, the obligation of his elect has devolved by an eternal settlement of grace? In this truth alone the conscience finds relief; it is the final refuge of the soul under the consciousness that our righteousness is unrighteous.

Nor yet in *principle* does the believer make the law his rule: for he walks *by faith;* and it is only as he does so that he has the testimony that he pleases God. But without faith it is impossible to please him. Faith lives and acts in the name of the Lord Jesus, and impregnates our meanest acts with the all-acceptable virtues and holy glories of that name, and the just live by faith practically and fruitfully. It seems, therefore, to be merely a matter of words for a believer to say that he lives by the law as his rule.

You "regret that I have adopted a sentiment so erroneous and dangerous" as that which gave occasion to your writing. I am not insensible of the kindness of your feeling, but am persuaded you have indulged regret without reason. Most of your observations are evidently founded on the fallacy of supposing that because by the law is the knowledge of sin, it is the rule of evangelical practice. But surely your own personal experience will not bear you out in the fallacy. Your conviction of sin has been by the law, but your sanctification in principle or in practice is not by the law. The law is not the means by which the Holy Spirit operates in making the redeemed a holy people, and cannot, therefore, be the means by which we attain a holy character. Sanctification by the law is as contrary to sound doctrine as justification by the law. I think I use the law lawfully when I look into it and learn that it is spiritual and

I am carnal, sold under sin. I use it lawfully, also, when I solemnly regard it as *one integral whole*, consisting immutably of precept and sanction, and a ministration, not of the spirit or of righteousness, but of condemnation and death. The law of Sinai is the law of Sinai, and not the law of Zion, by an imaginary separation of the commands from the curse. The sanctions of the law belong essentially to the law; and to separate one from the other is to make void the law, and merge the judicial integrity and wisdom of the divine legislator. Considering the law as invariably the same, I am compelled to rest in the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ as answering all its claims, supporting all its sanctions, and fulfilling it to that perfection that it asks no more. If the law be not fulfilled for me in the person and cross of the Mediator, I am hopeless. If it be, what have I to do with it but to honour it, as infinite wisdom has done, by leaving it in the hand of a Surety who has magnified it? He suffered the curse as my substitute, he obeyed the precept in my place; and if his suffering was adequate to cancel my punishment, by a parity of reason his obedience is adequate to supersede mine, especially as the commands and sanctions are but the parts of one law which cannot be separated. Our redemption from the law is as extensive as the Redeemer's subjection to the law, nor can I strike out a middle way between a perfect deliverance from the law by the body of Christ and a full accountableness to the whole law by a subjection to its authority.

What, then, are we lawless? I answer, No; but the ransomed seed, passing by the spirit of adoption from Mount Sinai to Mount Zion, are made subject to the dominion of Immanuel as the King of Grace, who governs them by the gospel as the law of faith and the rod of his strength. Thus

their obedience is not legal, but evangelical, not only because it is in faith, but because the *gospel*—that is, the present dispensation of the new covenant, comprising its *doctrines*, *promises*, *ordinances*, and *precepts*—is the rule of their walk. While, therefore, I deny that the law is the believer's rule of life, I maintain that the evangelical revelation of Jehovah's will of grace is his rule to live and walk by; and until I shall be convinced that this revelation is defective I shall not think it necessary to bind a yoke upon the heirs of promise which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

In discarding the tradition which you hold, I do not divest the Mediator of his office and character of Lawgiver, nor set at nought the authority of his sceptre. Glorious King! I extol his name, rejoice in his superior throne alone, and consider myself bound by his cross and sovereignty to live by the law of faith which he has enacted and entered in the evangelical statute-book of grace and truth.

> "Thy throne, O God, for ever stands;
> Thy word of grace shall prove
> A peaceful sceptre in thy hands,
> To rule thy saints by love."

This law you have incautiously depreciated and dishonoured by placing it in contrast with the law of morals. What, my dear sir! do you suppose the law of faith is inimical to morality? Every Pharisee in the world will side with you. It is the common reproach. But can we by faith behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, and be immoral, and walk according to the course of this world, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind? It cannot be. Sin dies in this vision of faith.

Believing in his name, we receive virtue from him, as the steel becomes magnetic by its contact with the loadstone, or rather, as the hand is animated and actuated by the life of the head. In living union with him, by faith, we walk even as he also walked. The law of faith is not the rule of the libertine, but of the just, who walk by it, and so (and not by the law) bring forth the fruits of righteousness.

Faith pacifies the heart and works by love. By faith we crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. By faith we fight and quench the fiery darts of the wicked one. By faith we walk, pray, praise, conquer, triumph; and whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God. But the law is not of faith. The believer, therefore, does not make it his rule of conduct. He is moral in the best sense, without being under what you denominate the law of morality. This will explain what you consider an anomaly in me. "It appears an anomaly to hear a minister deny the law whilst he is conscientiously careful to observe it." If by *great* and *precious promises* given to us, not in word but by the power of Christ, we are partakers of the divine nature—which is *holiness*—and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust—which is *sin*—it would be anomalous indeed to assert that our morality is attained by minding a law that is done away—anomalous if custom had not hallowed the inconsistency and given it a currency in our pulpits.

The Spirit, working by the law of faith (not the decalogue), is the grand and distinguishing efficient of Christian morals. He produces them by his handwriting on the heart, when the bands of legal obligation and rules of legal duty are like the withes that bound Samson when asleep, but became

as a thread of tow when he awoke. The strength of sin *is the law;* but let this be shaved from the head by the liberating energy of the Spirit and the blood of Christ, and the strength of sin will be taken away, and the soul laid at the feet of a conquering Redeemer, crying, "What shall I render unto the Lord?"

You would take a different course by "endeavouring to bind the moral precepts of the law upon every man's conscience." Is this doing the work of an evangelist, or is it the office of "an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"? If, however, you are resolved to do so without a distinction between the offspring of Hagar and the heirs of promise, be assured the Redeemer will come to Zion, and blow upon your ministry and turn away ungodliness from Jacob by delivering his people from the law, that being dead wherein they were held, that they may serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. He will cast out the bondwoman and her son, although it grieve the heart of Abraham in the natural part; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

I frankly confess that when I have made the law my rule I have stumbled, and fallen into divers hurtful lusts. I have been proud, self-willed, and borne down by the enmity of the carnal mind. I have bitterly felt that the law is weak through the flesh. But in the instant I have seen the law, with its authority, commands, obligations, and sanctions in Christ as its end, fulfiller, and glory, I have realized the sweetness and truth of Cowper's admirable words—

"To see the law by Christ fulfilled,
And hear his pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice."

If I am ever found in the way of true holiness, it will be in the chariot of Solomon paved with love; not under the law, which is the strength of sin, nor in the yoke of a commandment by which sin will take occasion to work in me all manner of concupiscence. My sanctification in the person of Christ by federal union, by which I stand in his glorious holiness; my sanctification by the blood of Christ, by which my sin is purged away; my sanctification by the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ as the immediate cause of all holy principles, affections, and motives; are the grounds of my *practical* sanctification by the truth, as the Spirit himself guides me into the truth, writes it on my heart, and makes the word work effectually within me. Making the law my rule will not advance me one step towards the holiest of all, but I enter it with boldness by the blood of Jesus, and in communion with the Sacred Three receive the unction of the Holy One that subdues my iniquities, creates in me a longing to worship nearer the throne, and sweetly constrains me, in holy meltings of joy, to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus. Oh, Holy Spirit, descend daily on a worm of the dust; bear me on thy mighty influence to the golden propitiatory that covers the ark, where the law is laid up in unbroken excellence, and its solemn obligations and sanctions covered with a weight of glory; that, seeing it in the heart of Jesus for me, my soul may be bound by gratitude and love to glory in the Lord alone!

From the general drift of your letter, it seems to me that you confound precepts which are founded in grace, absolute

promises, and the *spiritual* relations of Christ and the Church, with the precepts of the law, founded in absolute *judicial* authority, and the *natural* relations of the Creator and the creature. The difference, however, is obvious, and the distinction necessary. The precepts of the law issue from the judgment-seat; the precepts of the gospel issue from the throne of grace. Under the law, every command is bottomed on the legislative authority and inexorable justice of Jehovah, and enforced by natural obligation; under grace, every command is based on his purpose to save, and committed to the hand of the Eternal Spirit, that he may effect that which is required. The law of Zion branches from a covenant of unconditional promises, and stands in the mediatorial offices—atonement and grace of a Surety, who as fully engaged for the obedience of our faith as he did for the redemption of our souls, and received the Spirit without measure for this end. The whole code of evangelical precepts must be viewed in this connection, and the eye of faith lifted up to the cross as the meritorious medium through which we shall receive the power of Christ to walk in them. Otherwise our obedience will be only refined legality; a walking in the letter, not in the Spirit; acting from self, not from Christ; and the spirit of bondage will take hold of us, and provoke our corruptions when we are aiming to behave ourselves holily and unblamably. Obedience is spurious, and morality merely heathen, if we do not live Christ in what we do. But on this vital point the law is silent; it is not the object of its requisitions, nor within the compass of its rule.

Upon the whole, I believe that the tradition "The moral law is the believer's rule of life" has no legitimate foundation in the Word of God; that it eclipses the free-

grace reign of Christ; is calculated to mislead and bewilder the simple; and, while it is confidently summoned to our outposts as the sentinel of our morals, acts the part of a traitor, by seducing us to an oversight of the only standard means of true holiness. On the contrary, I regard the *gospel* as the perfect law of liberty which we are to look into and continue therein, and the sole and sufficient rule for the saints to walk by in serving God acceptably. This is the law of the wise, which is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death, as the Holy Spirit communicates his life-inspiring influence freely by it in the personal and practical sanctification of God's elect.

It was my intention to have entered more particularly and fully into the subject; but having already exceeded the common bounds of a letter, I must stop my pen for the present. Perhaps, after reading what I have written, you will not be surprised if I do not feel the force or propriety of the observation, "How strange (for a minister) to preach against sin, whilst he is inoculating his hearers with a notion which implies that they have nothing to do with the law that condemns it." I do indeed preach against sin, and insist on the necessity of sanctification; and I think I do so consistently by rightly dividing the word of Truth—giving the law its place, and the gospel its place, without being guided by a tradition that involves plain truth in perplexity. I thank you, however, for the happy metaphor you have adopted. I would proceed in this business of inoculation as the best means of staying the death-plague of sin and the pestilence of legalism and self-righteousness which is walking at noonday and filling the streets of Zion with its victims. Go and do likewise, and God will prosper you by confirming the word with signs following.

Hoping that I have so expressed my sentiments as not to be liable to be misunderstood, and fully persuaded that they are on the side of truth and godliness, I submit what I have written to your judgment and the sealing office of the Holy Spirit, and am,

My dear Sir,

Yours very truly and affectionately,

In the doctrines of an unmixed gospel,

GEO. WRIGHT.

FAITHFUL SAYINGS.

THE faithfulness of the covenant is manifest in this—that HE who makes the contract for both parties says for himself, "*I* will never forsake thee;" and for his people, "*They* shall not depart from me."

I would not exchange my state as a *saved* sinner for that of Gabriel before the throne. What! exchange the magnificent robe of Immanuel's righteousness for an archangel's!

It is essential to all who are called and chosen and faithful to be acquainted with the nature of a life of faith, and the means of maintaining it. This knowledge can be acquired only by the study of the word of God. The Holy Spirit, who always consults the necessities of the saints, has not only given us the grounds and foundation for our faith, but has added precious promises for our faith to lay hold on, and has also recorded facts which show us the advantage of believing.

Believers enjoy all their privileges in Christ Jesus: this implies exalted union and unforfeitable acceptance with God.

The Lord hath laid help on One that is mighty, that we may trust him for a present, complete, and everlasting salvation; that we may come to him in every time of temptation with the full assurance of succour; that we

may come to him in the daily business of life; that we may, in entire dependence on him, use our respective talents in his service; that in all our afflictions and trials we may seek his aid; and that we may overcome at last our enemies, death, and the grave, and dwell with him for ever.

Heaven is compared to a country; it must be of vast extent. Consider all the elect angels and the multitudes of redeemed spirits—its air is pure and delightful; its fruits are most grateful to the taste, and never cloy.

JESUS ONLY.—It has been the design of God in all ages to bring the person of his Son to the view of the Church as the object of her faith and love.

God, as it were, collected all his communicable grace, placed it in the person of Christ, and settled it upon the Church.

If the knowledge of Jesus is that with which eternal life is inseparably connected, all increase in that knowledge confirms our assurance of interest in that life; and believers should be daily growing in the knowledge of Christ by communion with him.

BACKSLIDING.—Few are aware of the easiness with which we slide from a state of well-grounded assurance into one of carnal security. We rest on our own feelings, and this begets self-confidence; then some sin creeps in, and by its influence we are led away from God. We may not depart openly, but we secretly backslide; the enjoyment of God's favour is withdrawn, and when awakened to a sense of our iniquity we are dismayed, and think we are too vile and guilty for God to regard.

Then Satan tempts us with various suggestions, telling us our profession has been vain, and injecting doubts and blasphemous thoughts into the mind. When he succeeds in

shaking our faith in the testimonies of God, he has gained his point; for without the truth there is no resting-place for the mind.

"There is forgiveness with thee." In God's nature there is forgiveness: when he proclaimed the name of the Lord to Moses we have a proof of this. Then it is a new covenant blessing, and Jesus has put away all impediments to its exercise.

Nothing is so suited to bring the heart into a right place as consciousness of the independent sovereignty of God and the entire dependence of man; and if man is so dependent, how desirable it is to be interested in the love and friendliness of God!

What is implied in waiting for God's salvation as Jacob did? Gen. xlix. 18. A desire for it; a patient perseverance in the ways of God with a view to it; some foretastes of it; a knowledge of our title to it.

When we so see Jesus as to receive his salvation, it is called faith.

Without faith, the Bible, with its doctrines and promises, is without us: faith brings it within our hearts, and incorporates its truths with our daily experience.

The name of Jesus shall endure for ever, as the justification and happiness of his people, and as the confusion of his enemies.

Many suppose that an assurance of the favour of God is only the produce of long experience and obedience. This is a mistake: it is the gift of God to the unworthy; and the sinner placing confidence in the obedience and sacrifice of Jesus has faith's clear assurance of endless life. He rises from faith to adoption, and from adoption to election.

What is soul prosperity? Delight in God.

The eternity of God secures the happiness of his people, and perpetuates the punishment of the wicked.

On the mount of transfiguration, Peter forgot that Moses and Elias needed tabernacles no longer, and that no place could contain the King of kings.

There is a decree gone forth which will never he repealed, "Through much tribulation ye must enter the kingdom;" and a quiet submission of heart is no mean proof of the Spirit's work within us.

"Adam, where art thou?" He was not where he had been; he was not where he expected to be. He expected to be perfect in knowledge, but found that he had only gained the bitter knowledge of the evil of sin; he was plunged in its condemnation, and was under its dominion.

The soul of man was originally formed for perfect happiness, and with a tendency to seek that happiness in God himself; but sin entered, and turned the powers of man from the true source of bliss. Still, the principle of seeking after happiness remains in man's bosom, the means of attaining it the Scriptures alone reveal.

Meeting at the Lord's table is a preparatory fulfilment of the final summons, "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Whatever a believer may hope for in this life or beyond it, his ultimate desire is to enjoy God.

How many of our schemes are defeated because God does not co-operate with us. Never put in a plough or scatter the seed without first asking his blessing; never enter into your shops, or upon any business or engagement, without praying that integrity may guide you, and that you may have all needful discretion and prudence.

The present state of the *professing* Church is awful; but

God will separate his own by one means or other, for he has decreed "the people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations."

"Watch and pray." Watch carefully the daily movements of Providence, and watch every advance of the enemy. But watching alone will not do. Pray that you may overcome. It is one thing to watch, and another to conquer.

Our bondage arises from want of simple, direct faith in Jesus. We shall be happy so far as we discern him so as to believe in him, believe in him so as to embrace him, embrace him so as to enjoy him, and enjoy him so as to glorify him.

The heart is deceitful above all things. The world is deceitful, but it is our own hearts that give the false colouring to its joys. It deceives us because we deceive ourselves. Satan is deceitful, but the heart more so. He finds in us propensities towards his temptations.

The understanding by nature is dark; but the Holy Spirit takes away the veil of ignorance, and we know ourselves, and are humbled under a sense of our exceeding sinfulness. We understand the difference between law and gospel, and find the one a killing letter, the other a ministration of life and peace. The bias of the will is changed; our affections are renewed, and our conscience does its duty, detecting sin in the motives, affections, thoughts, words, and deeds.

A speculative knowledge of sin makes it appear like a lion painted on the wall; a thorough conviction of its guilt like a real lion, from which we would escape.

The hours when Jesus hung on the cross were the most wonderful in all time. Then was the hour and power of

darkness; Satan brought all his armies to fight against the Son of God. He tried to wring one complaint from him. This, could it have been done, would have spoiled the sacrifice.

In Col. i. 11 we are exhorted unto "all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." Why with joyfulness? Because the trials which we suffer come from the hand of him who loves us, and they alter not our interest in his love.

In his providential and gracious dealings, God usually acts as he declares, "According to your faith be it done unto you." In his sovereign mercy he sometimes surprises us; but God's sovereignty is not the rule of our faith—his word alone must be our guide.

It is a maxim in the divine government that "without shedding of blood there is no remission;" and it is equally true that in the shedding of the Redeemer's blood there is complete remission.

Many in the professing Church will be found destitute of real love to Christ. Some are designing hypocrites, some unintentional hypocrites, who fondly imagine all is right from their attending to duties with strictness, and from excitement which they call religious feeling.

In proportion to our knowledge of God in his excellencies and in what he is to us will be our confidence in him.

Only under the power and efficacy of the atonement is sin subdued. While guilt is on the conscience, sin reigns; and it is a fact in the experience of believers that when pardon is assured sin loses its ascendancy. The liberty of believers prepares them to serve in spirit, and they are bound to obey each law of the Lord. The lawless are the graceless. In heaven there are no written laws needed: one law rules all—the royal law of love.

David's desire was, "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." Why? "That I may behold the beauty of the Lord"—the beauty of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; the beauty of his love in all its kindness and gentleness to his people; the beauty of his holiness displayed in his counsels and ways.

It is a distinguishing excellence of the Christian religion that it inculcates the practice of the most exalted virtues from a consideration of its sublimest truths and doctrines. In no portion of the Word is this excellency more displayed than in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

As, when standing by a majestic river, we may drink of its waters and feel pleasure from the contemplation of it, but cannot comprehend its source, its length, or depth, so we may drink of the pure joy flowing from the mediation of Jesus, but we cannot comprehend his love.

The soul of man is capable of grasping, understanding, desiring, and enjoying more than any other created object. It was the soul that sinned. The death of the soul is the punishment; the salvation of Christ is for the soul, and the eternal life brought to light by the gospel is the life of the soul.

The knowledge of salvation is the highest wisdom; it can never be attained by human intelligence. If we know anything of it aright, it is taught us by God.

The name of Jesus was given to our Lord before his birth to indicate his gracious act of saving his people from their sins. On earth his name was still the same; the Friend of sinners, he saved his people from their sins. Now, raised to his glory, his name is Jesus; and by the daily leading of his Spirit, by the continued efficacy of the atonement, by trials and chastisements, does he still save his people from their sins; and his name will be Jesus when he

shall completely deliver his people from the plague of sin, and present the Church unto himself without spot or wrinkle.

Our Lord has all the authority of a master, and we are not at liberty to alter or disregard his commands. He takes charge of his servants, feeds them with all needful food, clothes them with raiment which will never wax old, and prepares a house for them that will never decay. But he charges himself with no idle servants.

Watch your habits and actions. To you, as it were, God has committed his public honour. Bear it up, be patterns of meekness and kindness.

Duty is that which we owe to another; and do we not owe to him who has loved and redeemed us implicit obedience to his commands?

The gospel is a feast, rich in its provisions, pure in its enjoyments, and permanent in its duration.

Is it possible for saints to rebel? Let those who know their own hearts answer. We rebel against the sovereignty of the Most High, we rebel against his disposing providence, and we rebel by disobeying his precepts and disbelieving his promises.

The Christian may be regarded as on a voyage over the ocean of time which joins the two continents of eternity; he embarks in the well-bottomed and well-provisioned vessel of the everlasting covenant, in which none enter who were not previously registered.

Rivers are the principal cause of the fruitfulness and beauty of the earth, and Jesus is compared to "rivers of water in a dry place." The Church is dry in her natural state, and dry too in her experience at various seasons, but the grace flowing from Christ fertilizes and cheers.

Should you seek revenge on an offending brother, and your fellow-servants take the case to your Lord, be sure it will go hard with you. Tormentors will surround you—Satan, wicked men, your own conscience—till you are again in your right mind.

The believer does not expect exemption from trouble; but no curse shall be in his sufferings, for all events come to him through the hands of the Mediator, who died for him.

The robe of righteousness mentioned Isaiah lxi. 10 consists of the entire obedience to the law, the substitutionary death, and the graces and virtues of our most glorious Christ.

Even the called of God are too apt to indulge in over anxiety about worldly things, and then they each resemble the poor earth-worm, which every foot may crush, rather than the pilgrim saint with noble bearing and cheerful countenance, having the secret roll of adoption in his bosom, and singing as he goes.

Grace, when given, is tried; when tried, is triumphant.

"Grow in grace." Why? That you may be more happy, more useful, and habitually prepared for either death or the Lord's coming.

Christ must be my wisdom, his thoughts my thoughts, his judgment my judgment.

The precepts of the Word correspond with the desires of the believer: his heart echoes to them.

The effect of assured salvation will be a life of sanctified devotion to the Lord.

The good man is one constituted righteous by the righteousness of Jesus, one in whom are implanted good and holy principles, and one whom the Holy Spirit has created unto good works. The Word of God is his perfect rule.

That faith is worthless which does not produce practical holiness and good conduct.

Some are much perplexed concerning the doctrine of election, saying, How can this be according to justice? In truth, it is not of justice at all, but of grace.

He who imagines himself justified, and yet walks not in holiness, is a self-deceiver.

Why is the death of the righteous blessed? He is a servant, and now lays by his working dress and rests; he is a mariner, all storms and waves are past; he is a pilgrim: he confessed himself such, and now he reaches his journey's end; he is a soldier, and conflict is for ever over.

Man is ever trying some remedy of his own for the restlessness he feels; but God's thoughts and ways are not ours. *He* cures by the suffering of his own Son. "With his stripes we are healed." Men often spend their time in useless questions about religion, neglect their own souls, and perish at last. When the disciples asked an unprofitable question, Jesus did not answer, but turned their attention to that which did concern them. (Matthew xviii. 3.)

He who has prepared the *rest* is preparing us for it. All that he does for us, and all that he permits us to suffer, are conjoined in the all-perfect plan of his love, by which he will give us an expected end. The choicest mercies of his covenant are strewed in the path of much tribulation, and we gain our richest blessings from the trials which we fear. Even the rod which chastens us is embalmed in grace, heals the wounds it inflicts, and cures the deep-seated disease of the heart of which we complain, and which will yield to no other remedy. If now our spirits are oppressed with affliction and grief, the scale will soon turn and our joy will be full.

When we cannot come to Jesus as *sons*, we may come as *sinners*.

"So he giveth his beloved sleep." "Sleep," a state of quiet, rest, and forgetfulness of sorrow and care. "He giveth," etc., in Christ—from the sorrow caused by sin, in his full atonement; from care, in the knowledge that Jesus ruleth over all; in his providence, the ordering of all events; in his promises, *rich* and *free;* in the *service* and *success* of prayer; in the earnest and foretaste of future rest and blessedness.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.—There is a remarkable identity of feeling and design between believers, whatever may be their apparent difference. To them that believe, Christ is precious, and their aim is to glorify *him* by looking to him, walking in his steps, and seeking to enlarge his kingdom. Indeed, they have but one faith—the faith of God's elect—and that faith brings forth the same fruits and proves that they are all one in Christ Jesus as branches of the same plant, though various in size and growing in an opposite direction to each other.

SALVATION.—No *condition* can be a hindrance from being in Christ. Men of every nation and of every sort are chosen and accepted in him, redeemed and justified by him, and gathered together to him as their Head by the efficacy of his grace. The mean, the foolish, the wicked, and the base are as fully authorized to come to him, with full assurance of eternal salvation by faith in his name, as those who may be supposed to have some better qualification. There is no difference, for all have sinned. A beggar and a king have the same shadow in the sun. And *sins* make no difference; neither great nor small hinder

salvation by grace. Mountains bear no more proportion to the heavens than molehills. Were we in some place in the heavens from which we could see the earth, it would appear like a globe, where neither the mountains nor the molehills would be distinguished. In the heights of God's immeasurable grace, they who believe are equally the objects of his delight in Christ Jesus, and their sins, if sought for, shall not be found.

REGENERATION.—He who is born again discovers his new nature and life by new apprehensions of God—of himself, of the world, of eternity, of Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners, and of all the ordinances of his appointment. The new nature will discover itself by great humility. The regenerated man is humble before God, towards his fellow-creatures; and in the estimate he forms of himself, either as a sinner or a saint, he accounts himself the chief of sinners, the least of saints. He is humble in every respect—inwardly, habitually, constantly, and universally. Pride was the sin by which angels fell, the chief ingredient in the first sin of man, and in general the leading part of a sinful character. Other excellent and useful evidences of regeneration are the sanctification of natural and lawful affections, and the moderation of our attachment to worldly enjoyments, with a general and habitual submission to the will of God; in a word, the superiority of the interest of God and the Redeemed in the heart above that of inferior good.

> "I thirst to drink unmingled love
> From the *pure* Fountain-head above."

"*As* I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Tenderness and self-sacrifice marked the love of Christ;

delight in its objects, and desire to be with them. But one feature particularly is necessary as a pattern for ours, though, alas! too often a contrast to it.

Christ's love was marked by *wisdom.* It ever tended to *strengthen* in the ways of God. As far as our love to one another is like his, we shall be helpers of each other in the spiritual pilgrimage. Let us watch against the power of that earthly affection which draws us from Jesus. This power creeps in almost imperceptibly, but can claim no such influence as to make us hinderers of each other, where the soul is abiding in the liberty of redemption and adoption, receiving every blessing (earthly love among the rest—the sweetest and brightest) as the gift of a Father's hand for Christ's sake.

But very seldom did our brother's pen trace out his thoughts in verse. From the few hymns found amongst his papers we give the following :

God of the sea, whose mighty arm
Controls the storm, or lifts the wave,
Hurls the wild thunder's dread alarm,—
Stretch forth that arm, O God, and save !

Hear us imploring, hear our cry,
Unveil thy face, thy spirit pour,
Oh, bring redemption's blessings nigh
To those who stem the billows' roar.

Before thy throne in solemn awe
Bending, their ocean sins appear ;
Waken their thoughts, their spirits draw,
And in each breast instil thy fear.

Let not their lips thy name blaspheme,
Nor words impure defile their tongues ;
Christ and his grace be all their theme,
And joys immortal swell their songs.

Forgive—forgive their deep-stained guilt,
Adorn them with the robes of grace,
Show them the blood for sinners spilt,
Whose flowing streams all crimes efface.

Then, tho' they sweep the threat'ning surge,
When ruin strides the tempest blast,
Secure they live beneath thy charge,
Or die, celestial bliss to taste.

"PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR."

(II. CORINTHIANS iv. 8.)

Racked with ten thousand anxious fears,
Deep sinks my heart in woe;
My spirit feels oppressive cares,
I daily burdened go.

Thorny and wildering is my way,
Each scene o'ercast with gloom,
In vain with reason's beam I weigh
The issues yet to come.

Oft for deliverance I have sought,
And poured my burdened prayer;
But my deliverance is not wrought,
Nor eased my painful care.

Tossed on affliction's troubled wave
No anchorage I find,
Nor meet the hand that, stretched to save,
Upbears the fainting mind.

What shall I do or whither fly?
Where can I find relief?
Is there no kind deliverer nigh,
No balm to soothe my grief?

Yes, I've a changeless God of love,
Who promised aid will give;
He'll send salvation from above,
He'll guide me while I live.

He from the depths will raise me up,
And sweetest peace afford;
Wait then, my soul, with patient hope,
And fearless trust his word.

All things are possible with HIM,
All things his will obey;
He from deep misery can redeem,
And darkness change to day.

He can the wild with blossoms clothe,
Make the parched desert stream,
The rugged path of trouble smooth,
And gild with mercy's beam.

Though in adversity I move,
Crosses on crosses bear,
His kindness he will not remove,
But turn to praise my prayer.

5th June, 1821.

The above was composed by Mr. Wright, and is extracted from his memorandum-book, a few pages after the entry of the epitaph prepared for his first wife. He was in deep trouble at this time—care and perplexity caused depression—and doubtless these lines are expressions of his solemn feelings.

In hope of a glorious resurrection,
here lies the body of
SARAH, the wife of GEORGE WRIGHT,
who, in the triumph of faith,
left a state of suffering
to enjoy the rest that remaineth for the people of God,
on the 10th day of September, 1820, aged 29 years.

"O Grave! where is thy Victory?"

SUBSTANCE OF SERMONS.

Notes of the last Sermon preached in the Old Chapel, Beccles, July, 1859.

"We will remember the name of the Lord our God."—PSALM XX. 7.

"MY times are in thy hands" was the language of David, and this assurance quieted his feelings and sustained his hope. So it is with us in all the changes of time. All events are determined by the sovereign purpose of our God, and his providence brings all to pass. Seeing him everywhere, we trust, we love, we enjoy him in all things; in sorrow we can say, "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him."

> "Our lives through various scenes are drawn,
> And vexed with trifling cares,
> While his eternal thought moves on
> His undisturbed affairs."

Under his care *we* are brought thus far on our journey to Immanuel's land.

Fifty-four years ago the name of the Lord was recorded here, and the promise of blessing has been fulfilled. How shall we spend this hour which terminates our meetings here so as to show our gratitude? We are looking to a future, to some of us very short, when we shall meet in the new building. This hour is the connecting link between

the past and the future, and no subject can be more suitable for us than the text.

I. Consider the resolution as referring to the past. "We will remember the name of the Lord our God"—what he has been to us, what he has done for us. "The name of the Lord" implies what he is in himself; and he is *our* God by a relation which can never be broken: our redemption, justification, and glorification are but the fruits and effects of God having become ours from everlasting.

What has he done for us—the adopted ones of his family? Could the records all be written, we should read them with wonder, love, and praise. Some have been repeated in the glory world, and the rest will be repeated by-and-by when we too arrive there.

When this house was built, it is not surprising that some were fearful when we remember the little worldly wealth possessed by them; but they *trusted in God.* They built it that others, through hearing the gospel, might share in the mercy they had tasted. Afterward, the chief trial was the difficulty of obtaining a settled minister. Men of God came, and their labours were in some measure blessed; but difference of judgment prevailed in the Church, sometimes threatening division; but oneness in Christ cannot be materially disturbed—it shall be preserved by the Spirit till his second coming, when all who are vitally united to him shall partake in the honours of his kingdom, and share his joy. Forty years ago this difference ceased, and we have since then tasted of what David sang, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," etc. We are still preserved—one in aim, in joy, in hope. Let us praise him for preserving us in the unity of the Spirit. What is our resolution?

"My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life or breath remains;
There my best friends, my kindred dwell,
There God my Saviour reigns."

This building has been the birthplace of many souls. Here the Shepherd's voice has been heard, calling his own by name, and all things have been gladly left to follow him; here the prodigal has returned to find a joyful welcome in the Father's house; here the sin-burdened have found perfect justification; here the saints have found a Bethel, the Bride the chambers of the Bridegroom. The ransomed flock have here gone in and out and found pasture.

You have sometimes come here burdened with temptation and care; you have been graciously surprised into communion. Temptation has lost its power, and cares have been all left. Could each one relate the mercies realized here, we should hear from some of their being brought hither by a way they knew not—led as the blind. Sometimes the joy felt in the clear views given of the atonement, when you saw yourselves perfected by Christ's one offering, has been great. Here relief has been given in times of great distress, sadness, and affliction. You have come dismayed, and gone away glad. You have enjoyed the foretastes of heaven, and at times have been willing at once to leave the body to be present with the Lord.

As for myself, I regard it as a special providence that I was brought here. I came simply because it was the Lord's will I should, and I have served you with sincerity and affection. I may not have done what others have. I can only use the one talent given me. Sometimes I have been surprised that God should make use of me; but this it is:—"God hath magnified his word above all his name." With you, I would look back, thank God, and take courage.

It is a sweet exercise to "remember the name of the Lord our God." *Our* God; that is the reason why streams of blessing have flowed down to us, and we shall never be severed from his love.

"This God is the God we adore," &c.

II. We regard this resolution as relating to the future. "We will remember the name of the Lord our God." This will save us from anxious fear under all the changes of time. We will remember the name of the Lord so as to trust in him. The saints of old had their reward in this, while others were disappointed. "They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright." Leaning on a promise, faith triumphs (Heb. xi. 33, 35). We may not be called to do or suffer as they did; but we are called to live as they lived, trusting in the Lord. If severer hardships and trials await us than those of the past, the promise stands, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," etc. By trusting we honour our God.

We will remember the name of the Lord our God so as to wait upon him continually, and give ourselves unto prayer. Great have been the achievements of fervent prayer. Press to the mercy-seat in the time of gladness and in the time of trial; thus your comforts will be preserved, your wants supplied, and the sadness of your hearts relieved. Thus shall we prove the faithfulness of God to do as he has said.

Consider the inducements to prayer—the infinite ability of our God (he delighteth in mercy), his faithfulness. If we seek we shall find. Luther has observed, "No man dares ask so much as God is ready to give." Let us continue instant in prayer. We are straitened in our conceptions

of the divine benignity and readiness to give. If we understand it, we shall be often in secret communion, to be followed with open reward. Thus joy will be realized and care lost.

We will remember his name in our families. Who can tell the good resulting from family prayer? And let us be instant in united prayer.

We will remember the name of the Lord our God so as to be subject to his will.

As King, Jesus has given us his word to direct our motives and actions. Especially in all things concerning the Church must we be subject to him, obeying all his institutions.

We will remember his name so as to live to his glory alone, so as to give our all to him—our life, body, soul, and spirit, all we are and have. If living by faith, we shall have no separate interest from God. The laws of his house are ever to be remembered; in wisdom he has appointed them, and we are not at liberty to alter them. It is blessedness to be of one mind with him.

We will remember the name of the Lord our God so as to live in sweet anticipation of the future. Remembering his name aright, we shall look forward to the time of dwelling ever with the Lord. *Now*, let us give him our all; he has given us his all. 'Tis but little we can do. In another state we shall be prepared to serve him better, and to enjoy him more fully.

And now, brethren, "I commend you to God, and to the words of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

BROTHERLY LOVE.

Substance of the Charge delivered to the Church Meeting in East Street, Walworth, on the occasion of the Recognition of Mr. Jeffery Moody as Pastor, May 28th, 1844.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—JOHN xiii. 34, 35.

THIS new commandment the Lord gave unto his disciples just before he would leave the world and go unto the Father. He gave it to testify unto them his love, and to give them those instructions and directions necessary to regulate their conduct after his departure.

Mark the language—"As I have loved you." "Having loved *his own* which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Mark the emphasis of the expression "*his own,*" whom he had received into his hand from his Father, to be answerable for them, and finally to bring them up to glory. 'Tis for this cause he separates them from the world. This truth, as brought to light by the Holy Spirit, is the principle of holiness in their regenerate souls.

Love took its rise in him—their *Brother*—their *Elder Brother.* It is the love of him who came to ransom them, to give his life a price for their souls. It is this love in all its purity, in all its changelessness, in all its complacency, in all its delight, that continues unto the end. It could never be lowered in its degree, it is incapable of being greater. How rich is that love, how full!

"*His own!*" Brethren, let this be *your* watchword when you come to the Father—"*his own,*" by gift and purchase. Let it be your watchword *in the world.* You will have to be

exposed to temptations; but this will be a *stay*, a support in all. Let it be your watchword in the *family*. Your children, your relations are looking up to you, and your example will have a very important influence on *them*. And, oh, think of the truth in your *retired moments*, and then—while you are separated from the world; when you pass through the blood of the covenant within the veil; when you grow into closer and closer communion with your God, and are about to ask some needed blessing—think you are "*his own*." As the subjects of the King of Zion, he has given you a new commandment—he has given it for a last expression of his love before he went unto the Father; he has given it to form a grand characteristic by which his disciples may be *known*. These considerations give it an interest worthy our deepest reflection.

I. *The Import of this Commandment.*

The commandment itself presupposes a peculiar relation of believers one to another. They are the Lord's: he has separated them from the world to be to him a peculiar treasure, and to glorify God, whose they are and whom they serve. This relation was expressed in the first intimation of mercy in the garden, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." By the serpent's seed we consider all whose names are not written in the Book of Life—whom God, in an act of sovereignty, passed by in the covenant of grace.

By the other seed we view the elect, whom he has chosen to himself—predestinated unto life. There is enmity between these: there ever will be. Now, the grace that fixed this enmity was the birth of that relationship.

This love mentioned in our text is not to be borne to the serpent seed. We would love all mankind as creatures;

but this is a peculiar spiritual love to all who are manifested as the children of God. What *is* the relation? Sons by eternal adoption, and brethren to Jesus Christ, our Brother ransomer! The command is to *you*, who have felt divine grace as a quickening principle in your souls; and because of this you come under peculiar obligations, the obligations of the "new commandment." This is a relation that shall never be dissolved. Contention and strife—those deadly fruits of nature—may disturb the peace, but this spiritual principle of God cannot be destroyed.

This relationship is not founded in any external act of God, but in the immanent act of his electing love, in which he "predestinated them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ."

Christ, too, made them one in the blood and mystery of his cross. He rose as their discharged Surety, and they were discharged in him. This was a union formed which brings with it all desirable good here, and all glory hereafter. And if that union is to be the basis of your blessedness in the bright world above, it forms a very firm foundation of your brotherly love *here*, and manifests the *reason why* Christ has given you this "new commandment."

II. *The Purpose of this Commandment.*

The love enjoined is of a spiritual, supernatural character.

Many in the world are distinguished by the most amiable and benevolent dispositions. Their bosoms burn with every feeling of philanthropy, and this disposes them to be liberal, generous, and kind—to relieve the distressed; to wipe away the tear from the eye of the afflicted.

Yet, with all this, they are without God, and without hope in the world—incapable of any spiritual act or affection, their love never comes up to that perfect "bond of peace"

which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The highest natural love will never equal that pure love of the saints to one another—to those begotten of *him*—called by the same calling into one hope of their calling. You will have abundant cause for the exercise of this love, especially at this time; you will have to bear one another's burdens. The present state of the Church is one of tribulation. Whatever enjoyments you may and will experience, your pathway is one of trial and sorrow. Each member has his respective crosses—some are groaning under the weight of guilt, cast down under afflictions, under heart-barrenness so long mourned over.

Some of you have to bear the weighty cross of providential adversity; and this is hard to bear. You may ask, Why are these trials permitted by him who could make a pleasant and easy way to bliss? That there may be an opportunity of bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. How is this to be done? In relieving one another's necessities. I do not now speak particularly of outward circumstances (though their high birth does not exempt the family of heaven from poverty, and we are to obey this command by administering to the temporal wants of the household of faith), but the spiritual wants of Zion. Many are in ignorance; but receive and own the weak in faith. Many are cast down by temptation; they need to be made acquainted with Satan's devices—they need sympathy. The Lord has given various gifts, and gives also opportunity to exercise them.

In all your social interviews, "love is to be the great law in all you say and do." Oh, if this is kept in view, how amiable will Zion appear! You will then realize what David describes, "Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," etc.

III. *The Character of this Commandment*—"A *new* commandment."

We will give a few reasons why it is called "new."

1. Because it belongs to the new and better covenant, and not to the old and abrogated one.

The moral law is the law of nature. It enjoins exact obedience to its commands as the only way to happiness, but has no regard to those relations which are founded in sovereign and distinguishing grace.

The law (taken in distinction from the gospel) had its perfect fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ; he was made under the law, went to the end thereof for righteousness, magnified, and made it honourable. He stands in our law place, and it has therefore no claims on us. It is satisfied with the Saviour's precious blood; it exacts nothing of those who are justified in him—they serve in newness of spirit and *not* in the oldness of the letter. Are the saints, then, without law? By no means. They are under law to Christ, and every precept is addressed to you under the cover of redeeming blood, and carries with it a perfect pardon for all the imperfections of your obedience to it.

You are free from conditions and from the law, as a yoke of bondage which neither we nor our fathers could bear. You are bound to Jesus, whose servants ye are.

He has delivered you from the law, in order that he might procure the sanctity of your souls in the new covenant.

How truly blessed is it to be led by the Holy Ghost, exultingly to see the law fulfilled in Christ!

2. The commandment is new with regard to the *objects*.

We are called to love every one who is of the truth, that is, all the redeemed who have embraced the truth,—these are they to whom the commandment refers.

3. It is called "new" with regard to the reason by which it is enforced. "Even as I have loved you."

The God of Israel enjoined obedience to his commands because he had redeemed them out of Egypt. But we have a nobler incitement than this;—even because he has redeemed us from sin by his own blood.

4. The commandment is "new" inasmuch as it is the work of God the Holy Ghost to renew the soul for its reception, understanding, and obedience.

The law says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself," but the law made no provision to secure that love. It was given by God. As the ruler, maker, and upholder of all, he required absolute obedience, and had a right to demand it; but *now*, under the *new* dispensation, every real obedience is secured from the subjects thereof by the work of God the Holy Ghost. It is his office to write the law on the heart. "The fruit of the spirit is *love*."

5. This is a new commandment inasmuch as it will be perpetually fresh.

We lost all our excellency as moral agents in the fall; but this grace of love shall never be extinguished, and on this ground is the command inculcated.

IV. *The End or Design of the Commandment.* "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," and that not merely by profession. There are many things by which the children of God may be distinguished. Such are godly sorrow, conflict against the law of sin in their members, loathing themselves in dust and ashes before divine justice, the high esteem they have for the grace and work of Christ. They love him in his excellent glories as God-man Mediator, they rely on his atonement, his righteousness, his advocacy.

All this is because of their interest in spiritual blessings. The world around can never cherish a desire for divine realities. "What to eat and drink, and wherewithal to be clothed," is the concern of the unregenerate; and if you enter the professing Church you will find many "having a name to live while they are dead," and these are satisfied with those things.

Not so the regenerate—they hunger after that bread which cometh down from heaven, and thirst for that river which proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. These confess that they are strangers and pilgrims in the earth, that the world is not their home; they can find no rest therein, but they go step by step as led by sovereign grace, seeking a country—that is a heavenly.

The object and design is, then, to be known as *his*, to manifest by your life, in your intercourse with your fellow-men, that you have been with Jesus and have learnt of him. This is your Redeemer's will towards you, that the distinction may be clearly manifested, the *union* so evidenced that your enemies, themselves being judges, shall be constrained to say—and happy for you, dear brethren, if those around *you* can say—"See how these Christians love one another! surely there must be a reality in religion!" Let us show that we do not merely hold a set of external doctrines, or observe mere outward ordinances, but that the *power* and spirit of religion is yours.

Suffer this word of exhortation—Consider yourselves as the sons of God; that you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby you cry, "Abba, Father!" Love, then, *as brethren*, with a pure heart fervently; gather around the ordinances of God's house; do not separate from one another; let no shyness be manifested among you. If you

have evil surmisings of any brother or sister, *never report them* (it will need great grace to attend to these things), and be careful to cultivate watchfulness. If an evil report reaches the ear, let it not be dropped from the mouth. Some do, alas! seem to take delight not only in hearing of evils, but taking them to their heart and propagating them. Guard cautiously and carefully against this, and remember you are never competent to form a correct judgment of a good man's actions. Before you can do this you must know the motives which actuate him. *God alone can judge rightly.*

While I say this I would not plead for a wrong deed. No, truly; nor would I for a moment say that a good motive sanctioned an evil action—God forbid; yet many may be betrayed into that which is wrong by error of judgment, while their motive is upright and good. Therefore, until you can become thoroughly acquainted with the motive, refrain from judging too hardly of your brothers.

You must never venture to propagate an evil report of the feeblest brother. You are called to dwell together in love, and to seek by all possible means to correct what evil you see, rather than harrow it up to the sight of all the Church.

"Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves," "provoking one another," but only "to love and to good works. Assembling yourselves together and exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching;" and remember, whenever you meet together, you are *his own* beloved people.

Nor will you be fulfilling the high privilege of your calling but as you love one another, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the gracious law of Christ.

THE SPOILED STRENGTHENED.

"That strengthened the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress."—AMOS v. 9.

WE sometimes sing, "Wonders of grace to God belong." This praise is always due to him. In showing mercy, his thoughts are not our thoughts, his design being to show the aboundings of his sovereign grace to the wretched. Ezekiel (ch. xvi.) illustrates this. He is a light to them that sit in darkness and strength to the weak. In all our sufferings he watches his opportunity for showing mercy. When brought to an extremity, believers, has he not often helped, and left an impression on your hearts of his faithful love? Oh, did we know what he is, our joy would be full! Alas, we too much seek the grounds of rejoicing in ourselves!

The text is language of surprising grace spoken to his people while suffering bondage for their idolatry (v. 4—8). It was not intended only for the Church then, but for the comfort of the regenerate in all ages. May an unction accompany it, and may we be witnesses for God of its truth.

I. *The Spoiled*, on whose behalf the Lord will interpose by grace. It may be applied to all men by nature. The devil came from hell with all the powers of darkness at his back, found Eve alone, and attacked her, not by force, but by assailing her with unbelief. With disobedience all was lost to Adam and to his posterity, of whom he was the head according to the covenant of works. Their first-born was a murderer; the whole human race is spoiled, and we cannot recover ourselves. God may leave us or save us as he please.

It was his good pleasure to rescue some of these spoiled ones (Isaiah xlix. 24, 25). And it is more than rescue,

more than salvation—the spoiled ones receive more than they lost.

But while the text may be applied so, I do not imagine this was the primary, the strict sense of it, according to the mind of the Spirit. Spoken originally to the Jews, it applies to the Lord's people now.

Three things are implied. First, *a warfare.* When God calls his own from the world into the kingdom of his dear Son, forgives and justifies them, then they have to engage in a stubborn warfare against Satan, the world, and their own hearts. There, within, is ever an opposition. We cannot do the things that we would (Solomon's Song, vi. 13). This inward warfare consists in the opposition of the two natures, and according to the common law of warfare the enemy will sometimes gain the advantage, and spoil us of our most precious treasures. This *defeat* is the second thing implied. The world, persecution, but especially the power of sin within, may spoil us. Paul confessed this, and felt the wretchedness of it; but he was not spoiled of faith.

Sometimes the heaven-born vessels of mercy are not only brought into captivity, but are spoiled of that which they value most—their choicest treasure—liberty in Christ Jesus, so that we cannot come to God in the spirit of adoption. Nothing will make up for this. The simplicity, tenderness, and fervency of first love, too, is lost—a love that inclined the feet to move in swift obedience. Who has not lost first love? Is it with you now as formerly? He is spoiled, too, of joy, and looks in vain to any source to have his joys revived. Among David's requests, after being assured of the forgiveness of his sin, is this, "Restore unto me the joys of thy salvation."

How incapable are we of anything vigorous in the Lord's

service when the joy of the Lord is lost! He is spoiled of his hope, too; not absolutely, but the pleasures of hope are gone. He cannot look into the heavenly Canaan and say, There is my inheritance.

Then there is the *sorrow* occasioned by defeat. I cannot fully describe all the sorrows of a spoiled state. Yet the spoiled one is not to despair, he is not cast off.

II. *The Spoiled Strengthened.* We learn also from the text that God will come in the manifestations of love and strength. God will interpose and strengthen the spoiled. Imagine one taken in warfare, armour and goods all lost. His case is sad; but if one mightier than the enemy takes his part, he may be sure of a speedy delivery. This illustrates what God does for the spoiled ones.

He strengthens by imparting faith in himself. What will God do? He will strengthen the spoiled by the ministry of the Holy Ghost in reviving and confirming their faith; by being in them a spirit of wrestling, fervent, effectual prayer. Faith inclines us to turn from everything to God. The strengthening of faith is commonly by opening up some promise of the word, or leading the soul afresh to the person of Jesus, his blood and righteousness. Then we gird up ourselves for the battle. The promises usually are fulfilled at the throne of grace to believing prayer.

Not only the power of making requests known and of offering thanksgiving is bestowed on the spoiled ones, but a wrestling importunity, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Have we been stirred up to earnest wrestlings? We cannot give up stated seasons of prayer; but what communion have we with God? God strengthens, too, by giving the assurance of hope. Nothing so raises our courage as the full persuasion of future glory.

This is not a subject for the mere formalist and professor. It belongs only to the family of heaven, even to those who suffer most from the enemy's spoiling. We do not desire the conflict, but it is better to be engaged in the hottest contest with hell than to be settled on the lees of a graceless profession, at ease in Zion.

Why will God do all this for the spoiled? The first reason is, because he loves them. His love is not changed in their captive state. The second reason is, because he has established his covenant with them. And the third reason is, because his own glory is concerned in it. The love which he has to the manifestations of his own excellencies secures his doing it.

The subject is greatly comforting to the tempted, while it clearly shows the difference between the true and false professor. The defeat we suffer proves us to be living. The child of wrath may have his miseries, but they are different from the sorrows of the saint. For him there is no truth like this. May we be kept from the lukewarmness of the professing Churches.

THE DEW.

"I will be as the dew unto Israel."—HOSEA xiv. 5.

THE God of all grace has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature. When received by faith, we have the substance of that which they contain. They cannot fail. This promise, taken in its connection, proves that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

I. *The Time and Occasion when it was given.* Hosea lived at a time when there was a general falling away from

the life and power of godliness. Inspired by God, he told Israel of their sin, describing their backslidings and wanderings, and administering needful reproofs. We shall find in the whole prophecy an illustration of Solomon's words, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways."

It has been said backsliding begins at the mercy-seat. I believe it begins at the heart. Some influence comes on it which takes away its fervour and estranges it from God. It may be unlawful association with the world. Ch. vii. 8, "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself amongst the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned." This causes spiritual declension and decay, while the poor backslider is unconscious of it (v. 9). *Strength* as well as fervour gone. Happy is he who has a tender conscience, and by the spirit searches his own heart! Then the backslider seeks to obtain what he wants by improper means—from the world (v. 11, with Jeremiah ii. 13). When we have forsaken God, we turn to the creature for satisfaction, rest, or whatever we may need. Are his wants supplied? No; he meets with disappointments, vexations, and losses (vii. 12; xii. 1). Then he is compared to a fraudulent merchant (xii. 7), making a false show of religion while its power is absent, to deceive others. He is not as he was when, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, he found the necessity of Christ's righteousness.

But the backslider is not forsaken. In this book are some of the strongest expressions of God's love (xi. 8). In ch. xiv. we find a calling to return, and direction how to act. Words which God will immediately answer are put into the lips. Here we have an example of the unchangeableness of God's love. "He retaineth not his anger for ever, *because he delighteth in mercy*"—not *reluctant* to show it.

What superabounding grace is illustrated in the text! I will be more than a pardoning God, "I will be as the dew."

II. *The Import of the text itself.* How needful and beneficial is the dew, tending to promote the growth and fruitfulness of vegetation (reference to the Eastern dew).

God is as the dew in its fertilizing power. Special reference is here to the Holy Spirit, who alone produces righteousness and true holiness in the Church. His ministry is gentle, yet irresistible. No power can hinder the dew falling (Micah v. 7). The dew of the Spirit influences every faculty of the soul, mind, will, affection, memory. Apart from his ministry, we are dry, dull, barren. As the dew falls just where the Creator pleases, so the Spirit's ministry descends according to the sovereign will of God. Some may be here receiving it, some not. How *refreshing* is the dew—the withering revive. This is sweetly illustrative of the effects of the Spirit's ministry. When the dew has rested on your branch, have you not been refreshed with new apprehensions of God's unchanging love, of your interest in Christ and in the promises? Then the dew comes seasonably; not in the day. Often in the seasons of darkness and desolation the Spirit comes and refreshes. The supply is sufficient to support, sanctify, comfort. It is plenteous, as the dews in the East, coming when most wanted.

The effects are ample. The "lily" was one of the most lovely flowers in the East. How lovely is the saint of God when brought under the full influence of the dews of grace. The cedars were tall and stately, with proportionate roots. Daniel was an example of this. Ephesians iii. 16—19 illustrates it. The "olive" has peculiar beauty. Grace will beautify. Transformed into the lovely image of the Son of God, we become like him in spirit, habit, and deportment.

Remember, however strong sin is, it cannot counteract the ministry of the Spirit. "Revive as the corn" which has been nipped by the frost. "Grow as the vine." How *freely, rapidly*, and luxuriantly the vine grows! Then in due season yielding its precious fruits. So do the saints grow in the knowledge of God, faith, love, and hope, and bear fruit to the glory of the great owner. This is the effect of the Spirit's ministry. Salvation as a whole is the fruit of the love of the three persons in the Godhead. The electing love of the Father, through the redeeming work of the Son, applied by the Spirit. Whoever partakes of the dew is redeemed by the blood.

To crown the whole, we observe wherever the dew is communicated there is decision of character—renouncing sin and the creature. "What have I to do any more with idols?" If we are partakers of the dew we shall not reckon upon consequences in any step for the Lord. We shall be decided in heart, in affection, in judgment, in *fact*.

HEART'S EASE.

"Let not your heart be troubled," etc.—JOHN xiv. 1—3.

HERE is a wide field for thought, and such thought as we would wish to cherish at all times.

The first matter claiming our notice is the love of Christ to his disciples—"Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." His was perfect, pure love—love with a purpose even to redeem his own and bring them home to the glory of the father. He had come to do for the sinful sons of men what they could not have done or even thought of; nor did all his suffering and sorrow change his first purpose in coming; and these first words, "Let not your heart be troubled," showed how fully and sympathetically

he entered into all the troubles of his disciples, and how ready and able he was to afford them consolation. Of this he took every opportunity to show them. He had foreseen the trials they would have to endure which were calculated to give them *heart* trouble. He does not say much of other kinds, for he well knew that he must come down to our *heart* troubles if he would give effectual relief. He cautioned them against heart trouble on account of what he would have to pass through, of which they as yet seemed strangely ignorant. They would have to see him dragged from them and arraigned at Pilate's bar—then led away to be crucified—and with cruelty made to bear his own cross. They would have need of much grace for all this—and then, after his departure, he forewarned them of the persecutions they should themselves endure, but assured them that not one hair of their heads should perish, and charged them in patience to possess their souls, promising that the Holy Spirit should be poured out and shed abroad in their hearts to teach and strengthen them. And they did go in his power—met those persecutions with holy fortitude, and most of them completed their trials by suffering martyrdom for his name. Yet he had most perfect knowledge of all that should befall them; he took an accurate survey of their path from beginning to end, and assuring them that they were in safe hands, bade them fear no evil—nor *let* their hearts be troubled. And is not that his language to teach his disciples now? Has he not a perfect knowledge of all the way *we* have to tread? Let us look beyond all these present things, for the purpose of his love is sure.

Now, this charge is an absolute *command*, as imperative as "Thou shalt not kill," or any other of the Sinaitic law proceeding from Zion's Lawgiver; it is not only language

of sympathy, but of authority. Oh, it will be well with us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Let not your heart be troubled!" Well do we know that trouble of *heart* will not remove real troubles; but Jesus himself points out the remedy. It is this, "Believe in me."

They already believed in God; they had clear remembrance by the Old Testament writings of what God had done and said of old; they had a just knowledge and experimental of the "God of Jacob;" and now, saith Jesus, "believe *also* in ME."

Here is a clear proof of the divinity, the Godhead of Christ. If he had not been equal with the Father, it would have been grievous presumption to require the same confidence of faith in him as in the Father.

Faith in Jesus is a sovereign effectual remedy for heart trouble. Did *you* ever try this remedy without proving its sufficiency? There is no living either to God's glory, for our own comfort or the benefit of others, but as we live by faith in Christ. I do bless God that I can rest in that covenant made with Jesus before all worlds: all my hope and my salvation is there. If we rightly understood and were truly led into the knowledge of this covenant, as including all that God intends to do in the aboundings of his grace in the removal of sin, we should find the true, the only remedy for heart trouble. This is where the redeemed have ever found surest settlement and perfect peace.

Then Jesus went on to tell his disciples what they knew not before: "In my Father's house are many mansions." That house must be large indeed, for all the family shall dwell there with God. And the foundation thereof is well laid; the only foundation is the person of our glorious Christ, and *in* him all the building, fitly framed, groweth to

an holy temple. What he is he is *to us*, and *in him* we possess all fulness. This house is that of which Paul speaks as "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" it is that holy city, New Jerusalem, the vision of which John saw, *prepared* as a bride for her husband.

And there are "many mansions." Yes, Jesus saw his many disciples very different from each other, and some of those acted very unworthily of their high calling. Peter denied him in the hour of his extremity; Thomas refused to give credit to anything but of his senses, and others sought places of exclusive dignity in his kingdom; these were their prominent defects—faults as common to the redeemed now. Nevertheless, Jesus gives them equally the promise and interest, as though he had said, "I remember you all, I have taken you as a gift from my Father's hand, and I go to prepare a place for you."

Here are useful reflections for those who have mean thoughts of themselves. Let us argue thus: "I am to be saved by grace, not because I excel in this or that gift, nor shut out because of the want thereof." So Jesus assures them, lest any misgivings should arise, "I go to prepare a place for you"—"I go for this purpose." This one testimony is abundant ground for our confident hope.

But why did he go to *prepare* a place, and what especially had he to do in that respect? The answer to this would open a large field for inquiry; but one thing may be noted—he has prepared it by going to take possession thereof himself. Having obtained eternal redemption, he has gone as our forerunner, as our high priest, there to appear in the presence of God for us.

It is well for every vessel of mercy to consider, they are *never in a Christless condition.* But we must go into the world of pure light to understand the full meaning of this truth.

It would be very pleasant if we could get a glimpse of that future, and from that standpoint trace all the paths of grace; but this we must wait for. Yet when we can by faith realize this truth, we rest in the assurance that he will watch over our way till he bring us to himself at home.

The ancient people of God were confirmed in the prospect of Messiah's advent, and were on their watch-tower to hail it. And they were not disappointed. The signs foretold by the seers were marked and welcomed, and in the fulness of time the Lord came. So should it be our privileged occupation to watch for his *second* coming. In the New Testament this is used as a motive for living unto God, and above the world. We may surely expect this, and it is a blessed expectation. The ancient Church in words of ineffable rapture celebrated its hope. (See Song of Solomon, Isaiah, and other Prophets and Psalmists.) If, under the Spirit's teaching, we are led into this truth, we shall find enough to refresh us on life's tiresome journey. A just view of our incarnate Lord, and firm watchfulness of his coming again without sin unto salvation, are well calculated to raise our hearts above all the troubles of time, to move us to all righteous activity of service, and to prevent our affections being absorbed by things on earth. May the Lord the Spirit grant us this portion.

LIFE AND DEATH.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."—JOHN iii. 36.

WHEN I consider how often and how long I have stood in this place and declared the word of the Lord with but little apparent effect, I am anxious to know whether I preach the

truths which, under God, are best adapted to awaken impenitent sinners and win souls to Christ. My conscience bears me witness in the sight of God that it is my constant prayer and aim to do so; and, according to the ability which he has given me, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. And I desire continually to do so, that I may not be condemned and become a castaway. I purpose this evening to address myself to the two classes that make up this congregation, believers and unbelievers; and while I am thus taking my stand between the dead and the living, may the Spirit of God come down amongst us, to seal afresh those who through grace believe, and convince the unbelievers that the wrath of God abideth on them.

I. *The Believer and his Possession.* He is described as believing on the Son; and it is declared that to have that is to possess everlasting life.

1. *The believer*—"he that believeth on the Son."

"The Son," in whom he confides, is the distinguishing appellation of Christ, expressive of the relation in which he stands to the person of the Father, in the Godhead; and being the Son of the Father, he is God by nature, God in himself, co-equal with the Father, as he affirmed to the Jews, "I and my Father are one." Like the Father, he is incomprehensible in his being; he is eternal and infinite, but having, according to the everlasting covenant, taken up the human nature into personal union with himself, and thereby become "Immanuel, God with us," he is the image of the invisible God—the brightness of the Father's glory; and it is only in the person of his Son, the God-man Christ Jesus, that God is known, believed on, enjoyed, loved, worshipped, and glorified by his people. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Now, it was the Son by whom the Father was pleased to show forth the exceeding riches of his love, grace, and mercy in redeeming and bringing many sons to glory; and as our help is laid on him alone, so it is by faith in him, or the soul's full dependence on him, that we are justified, saved, and made partakers of everlasting life. "Verily, verily," declareth Jesus, "I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

All who are taught of God do thus believe; and the gospel, which is the testimony of God concerning his Son, assures them that they have life in him, and shall not come into condemnation. He is the gift of God to them in the gospel, and they receive him as a gift, and appropriate his righteousness, blood, merit, riches, and name to themselves, taking the gift with a willing hand. He is a refuge from wrath, judgment, and evil, brought upon them by sin; they flee to him, and are safe. He is the surety of the new covenant of peace, who has satisfied every demand of the law and justice of God for them; they trust in him, are discharged from their responsibility under the law, and are free indeed. He is a friend, and they embrace him; he is a shepherd, and they lie down in safety under his care; he is their prophet, priest, and king, and they come to him daily, that they may receive grace from his fulness, and leave themselves in his hands, that he may save them to the uttermost. It is enough; they are at rest; they enter into his kingdom, live above the world, and have joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. *The believer's possession*—he hath everlasting life. He hath it in Christ, for this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. The

union which we have with Christ, by faith, interests us in all that he possesses, ever durable riches and righteousness. We died in him when he died for us, and are discharged and delivered from our Adam state under the law—sin and wrath—and are risen with him by the power of his resurrection, and we shall live with him for ever. His life is our life, as Adam's death was our death in him; and "our life is hid with Christ in God."

In believing, we have our title to immortal happiness made clear and evident, but we have the earnest and foretaste of it by the sealing of the Holy Spirit. The title clear was the earnest given, the final possession is sure. For if our title to it is in the person, righteousness, and merit of the Son, and the earnest of it is the seal of the spirit of promise—how can we forfeit, lose, or come short of it? If, in other words, "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," the life which he possesses cannot come to an end, for it is everlasting.

Do we, then, believe—believe that Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, who died and rose again, is the Son, the Son of God, the mighty God? do we so believe on him as to have righteousness, peace, and joy in believing? Do we so believe as to see and realize our eternal redemption from a law state, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free? If we truly apprehend what Jesus the Son of God is to us we shall be free, happy, and full of hope, and shall live for him alone.

II. *The Unbeliever and his Doom.* The God of love, having "sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we (who believe) might receive the adoption of sons"; and having by the gospel, his own true and faithful testimony, given assurance

to all that "whosoever believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," every unbeliever is condemned already, and if he continues in unbelief the wrath of God remaineth on him. The preaching of the gospel is, therefore, if we believe, "a savour of life unto life" to us; but to those who believe not it is "a savour of death unto death."

Who, then, are they who do not believe, and who are under the doom of the unbeliever? The answer is easy and direct—they who do not so credit the truth of the gospel as a revelation of God's free grace and love in the gift of his Son for the salvation of lost sinners as to receive Christ, and place their heart on him also, with the persuasion that they shall be saved through him. This appears to me so evident that I do not see how any professed belief of the gospel, or any professed belief in the Son of God, can be the faith of God's elect, without such a persuasion.

There are several classes of persons who do not so believe, and consequently are under the doom of the unbeliever. I need not mention the avowed infidel, who in the pride of his own reason imagines himself sufficiently intelligent and wise, without a divine revelation, and regards the Bible as a human invention.

The first class of unbelievers consists of those who do not feel their need of salvation. They do not see sin to be so great an offence against God that they should be condemned for it, nor have they any fear of his wrath, or dread of everlasting punishment. Having no consciousness that they have destroyed themselves, it is evident that they are unbelievers in the fullest sense of the word: they believe neither the law of God, nor the gospel of his grace. If they believed the law of God, they would be converted as transgressors, and the grace of the gospel would be their

only hope. How many, alas! are thus hardened by the deadliness of sin, and blinded by the god of this world.

A second class of unbelievers are those who acknowledge that they have need of salvation, but are persuaded that they are to attain it by their own works of righteousness. There is but little essential difference between these persons and those already mentioned, for the former have no consciousness of having so sinned that they shall be condemned as transgressors, while these do not feel that they are so ruined and lost as to flee to Christ, that they may be saved from the wrath to come. Instead of coming as perishing sinners to the cross, they go about to establish their own righteousness.

Another class of unbelievers includes those who, from some slight partial conviction of sin and a desire to appease a partially enlightened conscience, hope that if they do what they can to serve God they shall be accepted for Christ's sake. The sentiment they hold is this—that Christ hath done his part, and it remains only for them to do theirs. They go so far as to call him "Our Saviour," but they do not feel themselves in such a condition as to come to him saying—

"Thou must save, and thou alone."

Men may profess to believe the gospel—profess to believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; but not coming to him as sinners wholly condemned by the law, without hope and without strength, without righteousness in themselves, and not so coming as to receive and rest in him with the persuasion that he can and will save them, they are consequently unbelievers. They do not believe fully and with the heart the word that God has given us his Son. Like the unbelieving Jews in

Antioch, they, by their unbelief, judge themselves—that is, they as it were pass sentence against themselves, that they are unworthy of everlasting life. Is it not, then, fit and right that they should die? The justice of God is manifest in their condemnation. For, being adjudged to death and hell as transgressors, and being so disaffected to God's method of saving sinners that they do not believe the gospel which assures salvation to all who do believe, how can they escape who neglect so great salvation?

The doom of the unbeliever is recorded, and the sentence of the Judge of all is expressed in these words—"He that believeth not the Son shall not see life," etc.

1. "*He shall not see life.*"—The life that he shall not see is eternal life—the life which comprises all is included in salvation from sin with its consequences—adoption into the family of God; the full enjoyment of his favour; conformity to his will, with the happiness and glory of his everlasting kingdom. This life the unbeliever shall never see. He shall never have any perception of it, nor taste of its peace and immortal delights. "In thy favour," said David, "is life;" but he that believeth not shall not, cannot enjoy it. An evil heart of unbelief shuts him out from God. The unbeliever rejects the only means by which eternal life is given, because he does not credit the gospel, which assures it to every one who believes; and as he rejects the means, he must take the consequences which inevitably follow.

2. "*The wrath of God abideth on him.*"—The wrath of God, which is the curse of his law, is upon every one who is under the law; and as it is by receiving Christ, the end of the law for righteousness, that we are delivered from the law, they who believe not remain under wrath. But what is this wrath? Who knoweth the power of his anger? What

is the weight of his righteous judgment, when it falls upon the dying soul that has offended him? Who can stand when all the attributes of God are made to bear against him with a heavy indignation and vengeance that none can stay? When almighty power combines with inflexible justice to punish one whom God in his infinite holiness hates, and must cast away for ever, because he deserves it, and it would be wrong, unjust not so to punish the vile, the audacious transgressor,—who can or will stand between the offender and the offended? It was the wrath of God which destroyed the world of the ungodly with the waters of the flood. It was the wrath of God that rained fire and brimstone on the guilty and abhorred cities of the plain, and made them an example of suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. It is the wrath of God that kindled the fire of hell, and will keep it burning for ever. This is the wrath which rests upon the guilty sons of men for their sins, and there is but one refuge from it. The gospel points to that refuge—the everlasting Son of God; but as he that believes not despises that refuge, the wrath of God abideth on him, and if he continue in unbelief it will abide on him till life's last sad moment; abide on his departing spirit, which will be cast into hell; abide upon his pale and noisome corpse, and on its foul dust, till the solemn day when it shall come forth to everlasting damnation.

Believers, adore and praise him who by his grace has drawn you to Christ, and given you everlasting life! Yours is a possession that will not be taken from you.

Beware of unbelief. Consider—oh, that you that believe not may!—what the Word of God affirms. - If you object, "Faith is the gift of God, and I cannot believe till it be given me to believe," I admit it. But though faith be the gift of God, this does not lessen the sin of unbelief.

THE WORK OF GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," etc.—JOHN xvi. 8—11.

THIS is part of a declaration which Christ made to his disciples a little before he left them to go to the Father, and it was intended to encourage and comfort in the troubles, temptations, and trials which they had to endure in the work of the ministry to which he ordered them. He here forewarns them of the persecution which awaits them, and then subjoins, "Because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."

The verses I have selected represent a part of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart; and as it is by the work of the Spirit within us that we have the evidence that we are saved and called with a holy calling, according to the purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, I hope that the consideration of this subject will be attended with both comfort and conviction—with comfort to such as shall be able to see that the Comforter has reproved or convinced them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; with conviction to others, making them know that as they have no mark or evidence of the Spirit's work within them, they are yet in their sins, without God, and without hope in the world. "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin." The word reprove signifies to convince, and it is best so to understand it; and when it is said that he shall reprove or convince the *world*, it cannot mean the whole world collectively, or all men, but either the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews (as in 1 John ii. 2, "And he"—Christ—"is the propitiation for our sins"—that is, our sins who are

Jews—"and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"), or it may describe those whom God hath chosen from amongst men, and who by nature are in the world and of the world.

I. *The Spirit convinceth of Sin.* This is his first work in the heart; for as the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick, so until we are convinced of sin, and know and feel what we are as sinners, we cannot appreciate the gospel remedy which God of his abundant kindness has prepared, come to Jesus as the soul's physician, or believe that his blood cleanseth us from all sin.

1. The Spirit convinceth the sinner of the evil of sin, and its exceeding sinfulness. Sin is the transgression of the law, and, as the law is holy, just, and good—a transcript of the moral perfections of God, the Lawgiver and Judge—every transgression is an offence to him; and sin in all its forms—sin as a principle of evil in the heart, corrupting and defiling every part and power; sin in thought, word, and deed—is an opposition to his nature and will, the abominable thing which his soul hates. Thus it appears to one when the Spirit convinces of sin; and as the sins of his past life are set before him, they appear more in number than the hairs of his head, and fill him with fear and alarm. He can no longer cover or excuse his iniquities—they are like a heavy burden oppressing his spirit, too heavy for him to bear.

By the law is the knowledge of sin. This is its use and design to fallen man; it is like a glass in which we see what manner of persons we are, or a balance in which, when we are weighed, we are found wanting. In the work of conviction the Holy Spirit brings the law with power to the heart and conscience; and if we once thought that we had kept it, it now operates as a killing letter—the ministration of

condemnation. The experience of every one who is convinced of sin resembles that of the apostle Paul, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin."

2. The Spirit convinces of the element of sin. When sin appears to be exceeding sinful, and the soul is impressed with the purity and justice of God, we can neither justify ourselves nor attempt to excuse the evil we have done. Our mouth is stopped before God, and we cannot stand before him in judgment. This David felt when he said, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." "If, Lord, thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" If there be sins brought to our remembrance which we try to cover, and are willing fully and freely to confess, they become like a wound slightly healed, without first destroying the festering matter that rankles beneath the skin and causes continual pain and anguish in the part. But the Lord, the Spirit, will search it out, bring it to light, and compel us to acknowledge that God is righteous, that we are guilty and our condemnation is just. The unenlightened sinner, who does not know what sin is, because his understanding is blinded, may think that God is too merciful to condemn and cast the soul into hell for its transgressions; but one convinced of sin by the Spirit is so overwhelmed and confounded with the consciousness of his demerit, that he trembles under the apprehension that God cannot be just if he does not cut him off, and send him in his wickedness to everlasting burnings. The criminal at the bar, convicted of his crime, knows that the sentence of the law that condemns him to suffer is just.

3. The Spirit convinces of the power of sin. But how difficult is it for one who feels the power of sin, and cannot remove or overcome it, to believe that this is a fruit and evidence of the work of the Spirit. The first desire and aim of a truly convinced sinner is to put away sin, to avoid it, to live without it. He renounces and forsakes all his former ways and course of life, and hopes to live holily and unblamably so as to please God. The drunkard abandons his strong drink; the fornicator abstains from his wickedness; the liar dares not utter falsehood; the Sabbath-breaker would keep the Sabbath holy; the blasphemer, the dishonest person, the evil speaker, give up the sins they have practised. But when this is done, it is found that there is a strength of sin within that is not conquered and subdued—

> "The more he strives against its power,
> He sins and stumbles but the more."

Instead of overcoming sin, sin overcomes him; the plague of the heart is more and more discovered, till in the depth of the soul's feelings he becomes in his own judgment a mass of loathsome, odious, dark wickedness, and struggles with bitter anguish against the "beastly sensual and devilish" propensities of the body of sin within him.

This experience of what sin is is the certain effect of the conviction of sin which the Spirit produces, and is that which David significantly expresses by the depths out of which he cried, the horrible pit and the miry clay from which he was taken by the hand of his merciful deliverer.

4. The Spirit convinces of the sin of impenitence, because they believe not in Christ. Precious faith in him is the soul's emancipation from sin. Sin is cancelled, being not imputed to the believer.

II. *The Spirit convinces of Righteousness*, because, as our

Lord explained, "I go to the Father, and ye see me no more."

This is the next step in his gracious work, and this part of the Spirit's work forms the happiest part of the Christian's experience—that which gives him peace, joy, hope, and glorious liberty. It is connected with and follows genuine conviction of sin. It is not by the knowledge of sin that we prove him to be the Comforter, but it is from the conviction that we are accepted and justified in and by the righteousness of Christ that we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of his glory.

The Spirit when he comes convinces—

1. Of the need of righteousness.

2. That the righteousness which we need was wrought out by Christ, the Son of God.

3. That this righteousness is the free gift of God, who imputeth it to them that believe.

4. And by the work of faith, by which the convinced sinner receives this righteousness so as to trust in it, the Spirit convinces him that it is, and by the evidence of faith assures him that he is justified. Hence he is happy; Christ is precious; all things are esteemed but loss compared with the knowledge of him. Everything else on which he would have trusted is dung and dross. Religion, morality, virtue, reputation, good works. Hence grow liberty, hope, love, patience, courage.

III. *The Spirit convinceth of judgment*, "because the Prince of this world is judged."

1. By the death of Christ, which was a death-blow to his power.

2. By his triumphant ascension.

3. By the preaching of his gospel.

4. And the victory soon he will secure to every believer.

THIRSTING FOR GOD.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"—PSALM xlii. 2.

WHEN we look around us, and observe the habits, spirit, and pursuits of men in general, and when we observe the prevailing worldly-mindedness and lukewarmness of those who name the name of Christ, and when we carefully and fully examine the state of our own hearts, we cannot but come to the conclusion that there are but few, very few, possessed of that earnest spirituality of mind, that deep-felt, burning, and devoted love to God, which prompt them to seek him above all things else and by every means he has appointed, that they may walk in the light of his countenance, and enjoy him in himself as their chief good and their essential blessedness. Yet what is religion without this? It is a name to live while we are dead. Certainly, if we live in the Spirit, and his pure unction falls upon us, we shall not be content with the shell without the kernel, the well-formed cabinet without the jewels, the empty pitcher without the living water. The thirsting of the soul for God is one of the chief evidences of his distinguishing grace; and if this be wanting, by what proof, by what fact or feeling, can we know that we are his people and that he is our God? Brethren, what are we more than others? Are not many of us at ease in Zion, settled on our lees, with but little concern to be otherwise? Where is the joy, the infelt liberty, the desire, the zeal, the pressing after God, the holy triumph of the soul in the light of the cross—the name of the only begotten of the Father, which we experienced in the days of our first love, when the sentiments and song of the heaven-bound pilgrim were ours—

"Nothing on earth I call my own;
A stranger to the world unknown,
I all their goods despise.
I trample on their vain delight,
And seek a city out of sight,
A city in the skies."

But it may be that in the general deadness there are some whose hearts are stirred in them. We will not despond. Blessed be God, "he waiteth to be gracious." His love is not withdrawn nor abated. There is a sufficiency of grace in our living Head to revive every member, and to make us like himself in love and zeal.

In the words of David which I have read we see what will be the state of our hearts if we are under the dominion of grace and are living by faith. David was greatly distressed, his heart was cast down within him; he wept day and night, yet not without hope, and his soul thirsted for God.

I. *The Object of the Psalmist's Desire.*

The Psalmist's desire was GOD, the living God, and that he might appear before God.

The word "God" denotes the one infinite eternal Being who formed all things, and who upholds them by his universal presence and power, "in whom we live and move and have our being." The *living* God, in distinction from the idol gods of man's invention, having life in himself, and the living God to them that know him. To men in their natural state he is as if he had no being, or as if he were not living: they have no consciousness of what he is, though "he is not far from any one of them." "God is not in all their thoughts," because they are "dead in trespasses and sins." But to those whom he calls

he is the living God. They find him living in his law—in terrible majesty, holy, just, and true, full of wrath against them that have sinned. They have found him living in the gospel, its doctrines, promises, and blessings. They find him living in his providence. All things would sink into disorder and confusion and become a universal chaos if he was not ever "working all things after the counsel of his own will." Providence is God in action, and predestination (of which providence is the working out and accomplishment) is God in purpose. And as God is the Father of his people, he not only is the living God in providence, but he lives for them, he acts for them. Precious faith brings us to know this, for this is one secret of the Lord that is with them who fear him; and it is this which gives quietness, hope, and joy to the saint, amidst all the shakings of the nations and the vicissitudes of his pilgrimage. Our well-being, happiness, and interest are all centred in the living God—Father, Son, and Spirit. Grace, in the living Three in One, comprehends all that is requisite to satisfy the largest capabilities of the soul—it is life, light, salvation, glory.

The living God is the source and the sum of all good.

1. The source of all good. Redemption, with all its benefits, pardon, justification, peace, liberty, holiness, the soul's beauty and meetness for converse with God, with all its graces. Victory over death and the grave with its triumphs and the glory of immortality are from him—from the ordaining love of God the living Father, from the redeeming love of God the living Son, from the ministering love of God the living Spirit, the Comforter. The Church in her highest condition, when purged from all her defilement, clothed and beautified with complete salvation, will be indebted for all to the living God, the source of all. And—

oh, delightful thought—his will determined it, and the immutability of his will shall perpetuate her blessedness!

2. He is the sum of all good. Whatever comes from him is great and good and necessary. But it is not our portion: it is given that we may be prepared for the possession of God himself, our final rest, and exceeding great joy. And when this world shall have passed away, and its wonderful scenes be ended, God will be all in all. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither by night shall the moon give light unto thee: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

This was the object of the Psalmist's desire, and is the desire of every saint. With this in view all earthly objects sink into insignificance, and are lighter than vanity.

> "Come, heaven, and fill my vast desires,
> My soul, pursue the sovereign good.
> She was all made of heavenly fires,
> Nor can she live on meaner food."

But we must be near him that we may enjoy him, we must stand where he is pleased to manifest himself. This David knew, and therefore his farther desire was to appear before the living God. Where is this?

1. In the spirit of sanctified content in what he selects.
2. In the sanctuary of his house by institutions of grace.
3. In heaven—by preparation.

II. *The Manner in which he has expressed the Desire.*

1. The source and seat of the desire—my *soul.*

The soul is adapted for God by its spiritual and immaterial nature. But it is the soul quickened, enlightened, and become the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, which is the seat of spiritual desire.

2. The intenseness of the desire—"thirsts."

3. The earnest importunity of desire.

(1.) How lamentable to record that among those who name the name of Christ there are so many who desire other things rather than God!

(2.) Happy those who feel that God is the supreme object of their desire.

THE THIRD PART.

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."—ZECH. xiii. 9.

THIS is one of those Scripture testimonies which very distinctly and impressively mark the dispensations and ways of God. It is impossible that he should do anything without a fixed design; and since we are called to live by faith, he has been pleased to reveal what that design is, that we may know it and trust in him for its accomplishment. Would we have peace and hope in tribulation, and live in patient assurance that it shall be well with us in the issue, let us turn to his word, and in the light which it casts upon every trial we endure we shall see that the benefit we shall gain will more than outweigh our sufferings. Such was the expectation of Job (xxiii. 10). Such was the doctrine of Paul (Heb. xii. 9, 10), and such was the faith of Peter when he prayed for those who endured the fiery trial: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," 1 Peter v. 10. This is the substance and import of this great and precious promise.

The promise speaks of a definite number—their trial—and its results.

I. *The Definite Number*—a third part. According to the tenor of the prophecy, this third part primarily signified those of the Jews whom God reserved for himself as a peculiar treasure when he executed his righteous judgment on the rest of the nation for their unbelief and wickedness. (See verse 8.) But as the promise was intended to have a more extended application, the third part must be taken to signify those whom God hath set apart for himself and ordained to eternal life from among all nations, kindreds, and tongues. Of what these are the third part it may be difficult to say; probably they may be the third part of the professing Church; but be this as it may, it certainly expresses a definite number. They are a remnant, according to the election of grace, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

The third part is the lesser number. Do we, then, belong to it? is the question that we should consider, and if we are convinced of the infinite worth of the soul, and desire to have a good hope of its everlasting happiness when the body will be laid in the grave, and the world shall have passed away with the fashion thereof—this is the question which will take up our most anxious thoughts, till we can say from the heart—

> "My God, I am thine, what a comfort divine;
> What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!
> His person to know, and to feel his blood flow,
> 'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below."

In order to assist you in solving this question, I will briefly state some of the characteristics of the third part which God will refine in the fire and correct with his grace.

1. *They are distinguished by their self-knowledge.* They are so enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and so believe the word of God respecting their state as fallen creatures who have broken the law, that they are convinced that they deserve his wrath, that they are dead in trespasses and in sins, and that they are without strength, and can neither obey the law nor believe the gospel. This is one of the first lessons they learn, and in their daily experience they are made to understand it more clearly and fully. The consequences of the self-knowledge which they thus acquire are these—they renounce and reject their own righteousness as dung and dross, worthless and execrable; expect to be saved only by grace, and give themselves up unto prayer, asking of God a free forgiveness, and that he would work in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure and the work of faith with power, that they may have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

2. *They are distinguished by their heartfelt faith and trust in Christ Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, full of truth and grace.* The gospel which reveals him, and which they take as a warrant from heaven authorizing them to receive and rest in him as God's salvation with full assurance of faith, is to them a joyful sound and good news.

Nothing they have ever heard equals the glad tidings that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. They see and believe that he hath redeemed them from sin and its curse, and that by his righteousness they are justified; as soon as they understand this they have peace with God, and from this moment it is their privilege so to live by faith in the cross of Christ and his finished salvation, that the peace of God may rule in their heart alway. Having found that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness

to them, they are no longer under the law, but under grace, and enjoy the liberty of the sons of God, and it is their blessedness to know and believe that they are interested in the love of Jesus, who is their life and strength, who will supply all their needs, and save them to the utmost. They need nothing more: their whole dependence is upon him; he is their all and in all, and for them to live is Christ.

3. *They are thence distinguished by their victory over the world.* "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God?" 1 John v. 4, 5.

The world in its corrupt state, under the power of Satan, is an enemy to the soul, opposed to its interests, well-being, and happiness, and they who live according to the course of this world will perish everlastingly; but the third part, chosen out of the world, and redeemed from among men by the precious blood of Christ, obtain a victory over this enemy by faith. It is to them a fallen foe, disarmed and spoiled. The spirit of grace in them gives them ascendency over it, and they are no longer of the world. In their best moments they dwell on high, and sit down with Christ in heavenly places, eat of the hidden manna, drink of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and have the earnest of the heavenly inheritance. This heavenly state and frame of the heart is seen in their habits and deportment. They take the pilgrim scrip and the pilgrim staff, journey over the desert, following the movements of the pillar of cloud, and resting when it rests; look for all their supplies from above, from the stores of covenant mercy; lean upon the power and faithfulness of God, and show that they are seeking a better country.

II. *Their Trial*—"And I will bring," etc.

1. *It is God who tries them.* They are his people by sovereign and unalterable choice, whom he hath taken into the bosom of his love. So precious are they to him, that he will be their refiner—will select their trials, prepare the fire that he designs for their purification, bring them into it, and bring them through it. For "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," Mal. iii. 3. The trials we endure may be diversified; but he prepares all, he manages all till the process is perfected.

What can we desire more? Should we not confide in him, submit to him, and wait in the patience of hope?

2. *They are too precious to be exempted from trial.* They are comparable to silver and the most valuable metals, which the refiner obtains at great cost, and which, when obtained, he must refine, that he may take from them the dross that deteriorates their value, and so render them more substantial and capable of being wrought up to nobler uses and to a purer lustre.

This third part is so precious that the refiner will spare no means which may be necessary to refine them.

What a price has he paid for them! What supernatural skill and powers have been employed in making them who they are! Their final destiny shows how precious they are.

3. *The trial which they pass through is such, and such only as will refine them.*

The end is fixed before the means are employed, and the means selected are always adapted to the end proposed.

[The above is left unfinished in Mr. Wright's MS., but it was felt that it should not be lost.]

EXPOSITIONS.

THE VEIL OF MOSES; OR, THE GLORY OF THE LAW, AND THE GLORY THAT EXCELLETH.

A SUBJECT has been laid upon the heart, and will employ the pen, of the writer, whose hope is that Jesus will guide his hand, and put a refreshing savour into that which he writes. Thy name, O Emmanuel! can give it weight and make it a blessing. The subject is, "*The Glory of the Law, and the Glory that excelleth*," founded on the historical incidents recorded in Exodus xxxiv. 29—35, illustrated by the comment of the apostle in 2 Cor. iii.

When Moses came down from Sinai with the two tables of the law, prepared and engraved by God, and witnessed the shameless worship of the golden calf, fired with righteous indignation and holy jealousy for the glory of the Lord, he cast the tables out of his hand, and brake them. The act was significant, indicating that, the law being broken, there remained for those who had done so wickedly nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which should consume the adversaries. The idol was instantly destroyed, and three thousand of the people put to death. At this crisis

of sin and judgment God might have disowned and cast away the whole nation; but he remembered his covenant with Abraham, that covenant which was an opening, in part, of the everlasting covenant of life and peace made with Christ, the head of his seed, and took the necessary means for the accomplishment of its promises. In the economy of his government, the law was ordained to be subservient to grace, and he commanded Moses to hew two new tables of stone, and come again to him, and on those tables he wrote the law afresh. In this instance "the law was added because of transgression, till the seed (that is Christ) should come, and it was ordained by angels, in the hands of a Mediator;" by angels, not as lawgivers, but as attendants of the Lawgiver, who witnessed and approved the words of the law. For "the chariots of God are twenty thousands, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."

Forty days was Moses associated with this company of angels. Forty days he beheld this stately equipage, these living chariots of the King Eternal. Forty days he stayed amidst the glories of his presence, feasting in the blessedness of communion with him. Throughout this lengthened period of love, joy, and adoration, "he did neither eat bread nor drink water." The body needed nothing; its instincts and cravings were unfelt, while the soul was satisfied with bliss, and found all he wanted and desired in the fulness of God. Just so, oh believer! will thy earthly cares and longings be suppressed, if thou art admitted to nearness to God, and enjoyest the light of his countenance.

When Moses came down from the Mount with the tables of testimony, his face shone. The divine glories

in which he had dwelt, and the deepfelt grace that possessed his sanctified mind, changed his appearance, and gave a supernatural brightness to his countenance, like the sun shining in his strength. Saints of a lower standard, who are not called to see God face to face in the sublime manifestations of Sinai, may yet be so blessed with the unction of the Holy One, and so filled with love and joy while waiting on God, as to show, by the holy lustre and loveliness of their deportment and character, that they have been with him. The disciples, who had been raised into fellowship with their risen Lord, by the pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost, came forth in the freshness of their first love, as men of a different kind from what they once were, and without an effort evinced that they were not out of the world. The life of Christ within them was seen in what they did, was heard in what they said, and so transfused itself into their habits, that men "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

"But Moses wist not that his face shined." He did not perceive the exterior glory that rested upon him. The graces of the most excellent of men are concealed from them; they cannot see the beauties of holiness by which they are distinguished: their sanctity is reflected rather than felt; they esteem others better than themselves, and acknowledge they are less than the least of all saints. Sinking into their own nothingness, their joy is to know that they are accepted in the faultless purity and righteousness of Christ, in whom they are complete.

The brightness on the face of Moses was so effulgent and dazzling that the people could not steadfastly behold it, and they were afraid to come near him. When he knew this, he put a veil upon his face when he spoke to them,

thus exemplifying the love which disposes the servants of God to become all things to all men, that they may make known to them the word of life and salvation, with which they are allowed of God to be put in trust.

The outward service being accomplished, Moses went in before the Lord, into the tabernacle of the congregation—the figure of Christ's body, "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man"—"to speak with him, and he took the veil off till he came out." Here we see the difference between ministering to the people and withdrawment from all earthly things to wait on God and commune with him. The veil was no longer needed, the veil must be taken off, that even that covering of the brightness of his face might not be between Moses and his God. He must stand before him in open vision, and acquire a richer glory. This, too, beloved of the Lord, is our privilege. We have a right, in the merit of Christ's redeeming blood, to go with liberty, just as we are, to the mercy-seat. Our sins are not suffered to lie in the way to hinder our communion. They may be confessed and mourned over with godly sorrow, and they will be confessed and mourned over by every one who worships God in the Spirit; but they are not imputed, because they were for ever expiated by the one offering of Jesus. This is our confidence and joy of faith, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; not for a time only, or occasionally, just as our feelings may give their verdict, but at all times, and continually, for never for a moment can guilt remain on a blood-sprinkled vessel of mercy. The joyous consciousness of full remission by the sacrifice of Jesus may be interrupted by various causes, but as soon as by faith we return to the fountain

opened for sin, and for "separation for uncleanness," * the gladdening fact is realized again, and we learn that our Lord's atonement does not depend on our faith, but our faith depends on his atonement.

"Salvation stands fast,
Sins present and past
Are into the sea of oblivion cast."

The incidents we have alluded to—namely, the brightness of the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount with the tables of the law in his hand; the veil covering the brightness, when he spoke to the people; and the veil removed when he went in before the Lord to speak to him—were emblems or signs of important truths, and we have to do with the things signified.

The brightness of the face of Moses, called the "glory of his countenance," was an emblem of the glory of the law. The apostle has combined them, in his reasoning upon the subject, as if they were identical, or at least so as to show that the one represented the other; "the ministration of death, written and engraven upon stones, was *glorious*, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the *glory* of his countenance." The glory of the law consists in its spirituality, and the perfect equity of its commands and curse. Its spirituality is an emanation of the glory of the holiness of God, a representation of his moral beauty, to which he requires an exact conformity in mind, heart, and action in those to whom he has given it. It is such a voice of words as declares what is congenial to the unsullied purity of his nature, and his necessary displacency with sin, both in its principle, the inherent corruption of our nature, and in

* Marginal reading.

actual transgression. "The commandment is exceeding broad," and so glorious in holiness, that it can be met only by a purity of love without a stain, and a perfection of obedience without flaw or blemish. Less than this is sin, because it is less than we owe to God; and being less than that which is due to him, it is an iniquity that must be punished. The degree of the evil is immeasurable only by the greatness of the being whose will it violates. Sin, *subjectively*, as an act of the creature, is *finite;* but *objectively*, as done against God, is an opposition to the holy glory of his being, perfections, and government, and is *infinite.* The penalty of sin is in exact proportion to its demerit; and since its demerit arises from its opposition to the infinitely lovely and holy excellencies of his being, and from contempt of his will as our Lawgiver and Judge, his justice appears, in its terrible and overwhelming brightness, in dooming every transgressor to everlasting punishment. The law, then, is a ministration of death, and as such it is glorious, because it reveals the glory of God in what he commands and in the judgment that he executes.

When the law becomes unveiled to the conscience by the ministry of the Holy Ghost, our sins appear infinite, our damnation just, and its requirements so gloriously pure and perfect as to shut us up from all hope of being justified by the deeds of the law.

The glory of God in his flaming holiness and avenging justice has an insufferable and terrible brightness which we cannot stand against, and which overwhelms the soul with fear, despair, and horror. Who that has beheld the glory can abide under the ministration? Happy art thou, favoured child of God, to whom it has been given to know, by faith, that the law is laid up in Christ, the ark of the covenant, and

that he, for thee, has answered all its demands. Hold to this, and thy peace shall flow like a river.

> "The terrors of law and of God
> With thee can have nothing to do."

In the veil with which Moses covered the brightness of his face we have an emblem of the comparative obscurity of the Old Testament dispensation. The precepts of the law were plain, but the Jews at large neither beheld the glory of the Lord nor the purpose of his grace in giving it. Only a few had clearer light, and these waited and longed for Messiah's coming, unsatisfied till he appeared. These formed the Church elect: the Bride, betrothed to Jesus in the everlasting covenant; and to this fair one, his beloved, his sister, his spouse, it was given to see his day with its brightness, joy, and reign of glorious liberty, and her out-breathed prayer was, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

The apostle, with a peculiar felicity of application, takes the veil of Moses to denote also the ignorance and self-righteous blindness of those who do not believe the gospel. "The children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is *abolished;* for unto this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament"—"even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon the heart." The same veil is spread over all nations.

But the veil is done away in Christ. We know this by the word of his testimony; we know it too by the sweet manifestations and shinings of his grace. The shadows have passed away, and on Zion's mount the light of daybreak

rests which will be followed by the perfect day of the Lord's coming, when the expecting Church will realize her hope, and God himself will be her everlasting light. The lesser glory of the law is merged in the richer glory of grace; the glory of one is done away, and is surpassed by the glory that remaineth. Remember it, oh believer! that you live in the glory that excelleth, and it will be your joy to abide in it. May you hear him that speaketh from heaven, saying, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

In the gospel, the glory that excelleth is the "ministration of righteousness, and the ministration of the spirit." As the ministration of righteousness, God in the fulness of his love comes near us, and by his own willing and powerful ministration gives and imputes to us the righteousness of his Son, and by the passive submission of faith we receive it, and are justified. Under this ministration each can say, with adoring humility and sweet assurance, "I am just; I am righteous; I am without fault before the throne; unblamable and unreproved in his sight. My God, I am thine."

It is the ministration of the Spirit also; for the Spirit is given because Jesus is glorified, to be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Thus, while the law has a glory, the New Testament has a glory that excelleth, because it brings to us all the righteousness which the law requires, and superadds the gift of the Spirit, which could not be received under the law. "Where sin has abounded grace doth much more abound." The dispensation is a dispensation of free gifts, and gratuitous mercy, life, light, and salvation, founded in the everlasting covenant of the triune God, and expressed in the form of absolute and unconditional

promise. In other words, it is a testament or will, containing a bequest of grace and glory which every one who is called of God is authorized to claim and enjoy as a legatee, because of the death of the Testator. Unlike every other will, the Testator, "who was dead and is alive again," is the Executor of his own will, and by coming to him we receive all and enjoy all.

The glory that excelleth rests upon all who, through grace, believe the glad tidings; they are "clothed with the sun," and stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, having the Father's name upon their foreheads. In this elevated region of pure and ineffable grace, where the yoke is broken because of the anointing, where the clanking of the slave-chains is not heard, and the air is not tainted by the corruptions that are in the world, they triumph in Christ, and sing the new song which none can sing but those who are redeemed from among men.

And now, ye beloved of the Lord, who are partakers of this glory, what is it that you desire but that you may be assimilated into the likeness of him whom you love, even Jesus, that you may have fellowship with him, and that your joy may be full? This desire shall be satisfied under the ministration that exceeds in glory. The gospel is the medium, the person of Christ is the object, and the Holy Ghost the agent and efficient cause by which the transformation shall be effected. For "we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "From glory to glory!" What depths and heights of grace are signified by these words, and what illustrious holiness! And shall it not be realized? What can hinder it but unbelief, which, like the alien heart of the

son of the bond-woman, keeps us seeking holiness in the light of Sinai's ministration, instead of deriving it immediately from Jesus, in the contemplation of the glory of his person? The Living One who died we must contemplate; to him we must look, that we may be weaned and won over wholly to God, that we may be strengthened, spiritualized, and sanctified.

"FULLERISM."

A main error of Mr. Fuller—and perhaps it was that in which his system and the arguments by which he defended it originated—consisted in the excessive and anti-scriptural ideas he formed of the accountableness of man. He attached obligations to him as a free agent which, in fact, never devolved upon him by any law of his Creator, and invested him with a responsibility for talents which he never possessed. Because man is naturally obliged as a creature to love and obey God, according to the extensive purity and requirements of the divine law, he maintained that the same reason in which his natural obligation as a *creature* was founded obliged him also, as a *sinner*, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation upon his having the gospel revelation. Independent of the absurdity of representing faith in Jesus in a light which classes it with the works of the law, I call this an excessive and extravagant idea of human responsibility. Accountability, if it relates to anything, must relate to some *service* to be performed according to the measure of ability with which the Creator originally endows us, or to some *trust* with which he has charged us, that we may employ it for all purposes of his righteous will—or to some *talents* which he has given, that we

may improve them, and return to him that revenue of praise to which he is entitled—but *accountability can have no place in the reception of gifts and benefits, which he communicates, with an absolute sovereignty of will,* to whom he pleases. How can any one be responsible for the gifts of a benefactor which he never received, or account for property with which he was never entrusted? A peasant is bound to observe allegiance to the sovereign and the government under which he lives, and to behave himself peaceably and justly towards every member of the community: if he violates the law, he is answerable for the offence at the bar of his country, and will be punished according to the nature of his crime. But who ever imagined that a peasant is culpable and entitled to punishment for a capital crime because he has not advanced himself to the rank of a peer in the realm, and secured to himself a pension for life from the king's treasure? If a proceeding of such a kind is absurd in supposition, because at variance with all the known principles and rules of equity and justice, yet such a proceeding actually takes place under the divine government, according to Mr. F.'s notion of accountability, which obliges a service under the gospel to receive salvation by faith, under pain of death, because he is obliged by the *law* to obey the divine will.

Of all the benefits and blessings of grace, which is it that the possession or enjoyment thereof hinges upon the accountability of man, or, rather, the *responsibility of a dead sinner?* Is it *Election?*—Rom. viii. 29, 30, ix., xi. 5, 6; Eph. i. 3, 4. *Redemption?*—Rom. v. 6, 8. *Reconciliation?*—Rom. v. 10. *Justification?*—Rom. iii. 21, 28, viii. 3, 4, x. 4. *Faith?*—Eph. i. 19, ii. 8; Phil. i. 29; Col. ii. 12; John vi. 29; Acts xiii. 48, xiv. 27. *Or even*

personal and practical holiness and obedience?—Ezek. xvi. 60, 63, xxxvi. 25, 27; Jer. xxxii. 38, 40. Search these and other scriptures of a similar import, and compare them with the work of God in your personal experience, and you will see indeed that you must put the crown of salvation where you delight to see it—on the head, not of human accountableness, but the sovereignty of Jehovah's grace. Under this view I am sure you will join with me in the most unfeigned abhorrence of a system that robs him of his glory, and enhances the condemnation of the guilty to an immeasurable degree by increasing their responsibility.—*Beccles*, 1830.

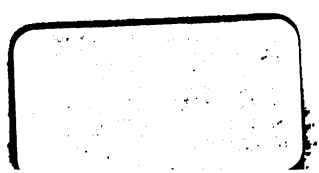
THE TWO HEADSHIPS.

1 COR. XV. 22.—This passage certainly does not relate to the atonement, but to the resurrection; and not to the general resurrection of all mankind, but to the resurrection of the just. The argument of the apostle is simply this, that as Adam and Christ are the heads of their respective seeds, so as *in* Adam all his seed die, even so *in* Christ all his seed shall be made alive. *In* Christ designates the union between Christ and those that are his, by which, amongst other blessings, his life in the power of his resurrection becomes their life, and will reanimate their sleeping dust at his coming. But such a union is never said to be between him and all mankind, and consequently its blessed and glorious results were never designed to be extended to all mankind. As soon will the bramble and thistle produce grapes as those who are not united to Christ by the election of grace partake of the fruits of his mediation. The limitation of the proposition, "in Christ shall *all* be made alive," to the elect alone who are united to him, is both

illustrated and confirmed in the following verse, by a beautiful allusion to the typical rite of presenting the wave-sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest to the Lord, which was followed by the gathering in of the whole crop in the land of Canaan. "But *every man in his own order*, Christ the first-fruits; afterward THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S at his coming." (See also verses 45—49.)

Rom. v. 18 was not intended to prove the doctrine of universal redemption, nor the universal sufficiency of the atonement, nor can it be adduced in support of either one or the other, without wresting it from the connection in which it stands, and falsifying the testimony itself. The drift of the whole passage, from the 12th to the 19th verses inclusive, is evidently to illustrate the doctrine which the apostle was inculcating, and which, in the foregoing part of the epistle, he has established—namely, that men who are guilty and ungodly in themselves, yet believing in Christ Jesus, are justified, that is, constituted or adjudged just or righteous, by his righteousness alone imputed to them. This is a mystery; for, according to human judgment and reason, the righteousness of one cannot be the righteousness of another; and in no instance in judicial transactions can the moral excellence of an innocent and just person be imputed to the delinquent at the bar so as to exonerate him from guilt, and constitute him just or righteous. Yet, mysterious as this method of justifying the ungodly before God may be, it is illustrated by the doctrine of the fall. For it is a fact that by the sin or offence of Adam all men were made sinners, not by becoming the subjects of corruption, but by being implicated in the guilt of his transgression, and so "death (all penal evil) passed upon all men, and judgment came upon all men to condemnation." But how do the guilt and condemnation of

all mankind by the disobedience of Adam illustrate the justification of sinners by the obedience of Christ? In this way and upon this ground—Adam was the figure or type of him that was to come. Now, Adam was a type of Christ as a federal head and representative of others. As, then, all those of whom Adam was the federal head and representative were made sinners and condemned by his disobedience, so all those of whom Christ, the antitype, is the federal head and representative are, according to the analogy, justified by his obedience. This, I think, is the point which the apostle establishes. If, however, it be argued that the "all men" in the latter part of verse 18 signify the same individuals numerically as the "all men" in the first part, it must be concluded that all men universally are justified by the righteousness of Christ. But this is demonstrably false.—1841.

HEBREWS ii. 17, 18.—Never during an experience of forty years have I had such violent temptations, such darkness and depression, as during the past year: week after week it lasted, till hope was almost gone. The suggestion that I was a self-deceiver drove me almost to despair. At length a ray of light revealed the Crucified; I saw Jesus, and I had peace. This useful lesson I learned,—that only from the person, blood-shedding, righteousness, offices, and merit of Jesus can we gain satisfaction and a peaceful hope.—*April*, 1854.

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